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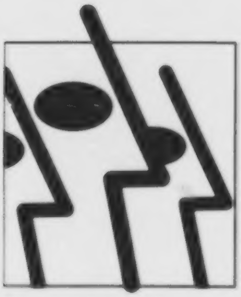
ABSTRACT

Recognizing the importance of good leadership to the achievement of educational excellence, the second edition of this handbook synthesizes a large body of school leadership literature and explores the subject from three perspectives: the person, the structure, and the skills. Part I examines characteristics of today's educational leaders; effective leadership styles and qualities; administrator training, hiring, and induction methods; and the scarcity of female and black school leaders. Part II looks at the organizational supports underlying school leadership. This section examines the balance of authority between the central office and the school site, the team approach to management, the decision-making context, and the components of school climate. Part III highlights leadership abilities needed by today's school administrators. Besides knowing how to manage the school's instructional program and staff, administrators must be able to communicate in today's more open, sharing organization; build coalitions of community groups; make meetings more productive; and manage time, stress, and conflict more effectively. Concerned about integrating theory with practice, the book offers many practical suggestions for using the information presented. Accompanying each chapter are extensive bibliographical references that appear at the end of the volume. (MLH)

School Leadership

Handbook for Excellence



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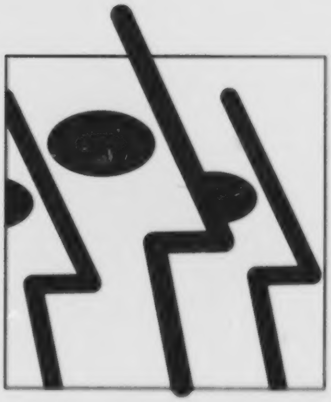
Edited by Stuart C. Smith and Philip K. Piele

Foreword by Edwin M. Bridges



ERIC

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About ERIC

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system operated by the U.S. Department of Education. ERIC serves the educational community by disseminating educational research results and other resource information that can be used in developing more effective educational programs.

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Besides processing documents and journal articles, the Clearinghouse prepares bibliographies, literature reviews, monographs, and other interpretive research studies on topics in its educational area.

Preface

School leadership has long been a priority topic for publications of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. We published the first edition of this handbook in 1981 after many principals, superintendents, and other administrators communicated to us their need for practical information that would help them to be more effective leaders of their schools. The response to that handbook, which synthesized research findings and current practices on twelve topics, convinced us that the book was on target in meeting that need. Many administrators have told us they consult the handbook regularly, and the book also has been widely used as a text in the preservice and inservice training of school leaders throughout the country.

The change in subtitles—from "Handbook for Survival" to "Handbook for Excellence"—reflects a shift in the priorities and challenges facing school leaders from the early to the late 1980s, as Edwin M. Bridges explains in his foreword.

Of the fifteen chapters in this second edition, four are new. The chapter on "Training and Selecting School Leaders" is a timely addition in view of the anticipated retirement, during the next decade, of about one-half of all U.S. school principals. New chapters on "Leading the Instructional Program" and "Leading the Instructional Staff" fill a gap in the original volume, which did not address instructional leadership. Finally, the chapter on "Building Coalitions" speaks to the challenge all school leaders face of aggressively seeking their communities' support for education

The other eleven chapters have been revised and, in the process, expanded to address some new findings or issues that have come into prominence since the first volume went to press in 1981. Consequently, these eleven chapters and their accompanying bibliographies are somewhat longer than their original versions. Several chapters that feature case studies of school or district practices rely on both written sources and interviews of practitioners. In such cases, followup interviews were conducted to bring the reports up to date. One chapter in the original volume, "Solving Problems," was omitted from this edition.

This book exemplifies the particular philosophy of information analysis that has guided the publications program of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management for more than two decades. Two key elements of that philosophy are *practicality* and *readability*.

In our view, the summary or analysis of research findings should not be an end in itself. Rather, keeping in mind that our main audience is school principals and superintendents, we have sought to point out the practical implications of the research findings—what they mean for the operation of schools and the day-to-day interactions of school leaders with other administrators, teachers, students, and the public. Hence, all the chapters in this volume include sections that spell out implications, recommendations, or guidelines for putting knowledge into practice. Adding to the book's practical focus are many examples or case studies of actual school programs or school leaders at work.

No matter how practical a book's content might be for school leaders, they will not find it useful if the prose is inaccessible. Again with our readers in mind, we have selected authors who write with clarity and precision. Each chapter is a simple yet detailed exposition of ideas and evidence on the topic, free of jargon and technical data. So as not to slow down the reader with a multitude of dates and page numbers, intext references to published materials cite only the authors' names. For those readers who want to explore a topic further, each chapter's ample bibliography is an ideal starting place.

Each edition of this book has been critically reviewed by a scholar with expertise in the subject area. The contribution of Thomas J. Sergiovanni, who reviewed and wrote the foreword to the first edition, is still evident in this second edition. As a result of his comments, the book's concept of leadership is broader and better articulated than it would have been otherwise.

Edwin M. Bridges, whose foreword graces this edition, provided a fresh and comprehensive critique that strengthened each chapter's focus. We are deeply grateful to Professor Bridges for his energy in undertaking this project.

The chapters' authors are research analysts and writers with a special interest in education who were commissioned by the Clearinghouse. When an original chapter was updated by another writer or writers, all the authors' names appear. Appreciation is due all the authors for their skill in organizing and bringing clarity to the volumes of information that attended their topics.

We also thank George Beltran of the University of Oregon Publications Office for the book's design, Donna Atto and other Clearinghouse staff members for their keyboarding of the text, Deborah Drost for her proofreading, Linda Lumsden for editing several of the chapters, and Lumsden and Karen Smith for their expert layout of each page on Ventura Publisher.

Foreword

The context for schools undergoes continual transformation. In the seventies and early eighties, the schools were in a state of organizational decline. Enrollments were falling, taxpayers were rebelling, parents were expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of public education, and administrators were facing the need to reduce expenditures and to lay off teachers.

As we enter the last decade of the twentieth century, there are signs that the decline is slowing and the climate for schools is becoming much more positive. During the most recent Presidential campaign, both candidates, when they weren't attacking one another, professed to be "card-carrying" supporters of public education. Schools, though still not adequately funded, are receiving more financial resources than was the case a few years ago. Enrollments are expanding, especially at the elementary level, and this expansion will be felt in high schools by the midnineties. For the first time in more than a decade teacher salaries are increasing faster than the rate of inflation.

Although the climate for public education is more positive, the changing context also poses a new set of challenges. Over the next few years, nearly one-half of the current teaching force will need to be replaced, and the supply of teachers is projected to fall short of the demand. Enrollments will expand by 20 percent; moreover, the student population will become increasingly diverse. In the near future, the public schools will be composed largely of minorities and a rising number of students who come from limited-English-speaking, poverty, single-parent, and transitional households.

School leaders, especially principals, will play a major role in determining how effectively the public schools are able to respond to these challenges. To meet these challenges successfully, principals necessarily must switch intellectual gears; they must attend to issues of excellence, not survival. The editors of this book, *School Leadership: Handbook for Excellence*, have anticipated this need and provided a valuable resource for those who are interested in preparing themselves to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

The essence of leadership is achieving results through people. Understandably, this book emphasizes these two aspects of leadership and provides the reader with informative and insightful treatments of a broad array of issues related to this important topic. If a leader is to accomplish results through others, he or she must be able to select teachers who can stand and deliver; to adopt leadership styles and practices that capitalize on the talents and skills the new teachers bring to their roles; to create organizational conditions under which people are motivated to do their best; to mobilize the resources and the support that they need in order to perform; and to make constructive use of the conflict that inevitably arises when people work together. These interrelated issues of school leadership are the very ones that the editors of this book have elected to underscore.

When discussing each of these issues, the authors provide a balanced perspective. They do not attempt to sell you on a particular way of thinking about an issue. Rather, the authors present the alternatives and the theory, research, and practical wisdom that speak to the soundness of these various options. They also recognize that there is a creative side of leadership where the leaders must assess the situation that they face and decide how to act in light of what they know about the particular situation and the relevant theory, research, and practical wisdom. There are no recipes to be found in this book, and rightfully so given the complexities inherent in being a school leader.

This book is also highly readable. Both the editors and the authors have striven to provide numerous examples of what a theory or a concept looks like in actual practice and to offer suggestions for translating theory and research into practice. Although I was familiar with much of the literature that formed the basis for the discussion of the various leadership issues that they treated, I found that their syntheses surfaced new questions and new insights. For school leaders or aspiring leaders who are unfamiliar with much of this literature, I am confident that this book will become a valued resource, one to which they will turn and return as they confront the timely and timeless issues which this book addresses.

Edwin M. Bridges

Professor of Education
and Director, Prospective Principals' Program
Stanford University

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Second Edition

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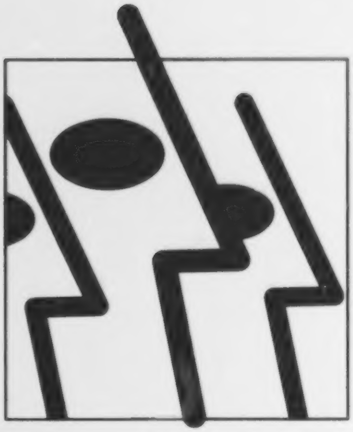

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Introduction

Leadership for Excellence

> "Leadership" is a word on everyone's lips. The young attack it and the old grow wistful for it. Parents have lost it and police seek it. Experts claim it and artists spurn it, while scholars want it. Philosophers reconcile it (as authority) with liberty and theologians demonstrate its compatibility with conscience. If bureaucrats pretend they have it, politicians wish they did. Everybody agrees there is less of it than there used to be.
>
> —Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus

Everyone knows how necessary and important leadership is. Why do some companies, teams, and schools succeed when others fail? The credit or blame most often goes to the manager, coach, or principal. After interviewing sixty corporate and thirty public-sector leaders, Bennis and Nanus concluded, "The factor that empowers the work force and ultimately determines which organizations succeed or fail is the leadership of those organizations."

But why is so little known about a subject that is on everyone's mind so much of the time? Certainly one reason leadership remains an elusive topic is the difficulty of agreeing on what it is. So an appropriate way to begin this book on school leadership is to present several definitions of leadership, including the one on which we, the editors, agree.

Literally hundreds of definitions of *leadership* have been offered. Some emphasize change or moving forward (implicit in the verb "to lead"), such as James Lipham's definition of leadership as "that behavior of an individual which initiates a new structure in interaction within a social system."

Other definitions see the leader as a facilitator or helper, such as this from Charles Bird: "Ideally, leadership is a form of mutual cooperation through which the superior skill of a person enables the led to attain ends or satisfy motives." Other definitions differentiate between management and leadership. Carl Welte defined *management* as the "mental and physical effort to coordinate diverse activities to achieve desired results" and included in this process "planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling." In contrast, he saw *leadership* as "natural and learned ability, skill, and personal characteristics to conduct interpersonal relations which influence people to take desired actions." In simpler terms, John Pejza expresses the difference as follows: "You lead people; you manage things."

This emphasis on personal relations occurs in many definitions of

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leadership. Fred Fiedler, Martin Chemers, and Linda Mahar have noted that leadership includes "the ability to counsel, manage conflict, inspire loyalty, and imbue subordinates with a desire to remain on the job." Speaking more plainly, former President Harry Truman said, "My definition of a leader in a free country is a man who can persuade people to do what they don't want to do, or do what they're too lazy to do, and like it."

One of the best definitions of leadership was suggested by George Terry, who called it "the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group goals." This is the definition of leadership on which this book is based. The purpose of the book is to suggest the knowledge, structure, and skills necessary for a leader to inspire all members of the school community to work together toward the goal of an excellent education for all.

Another, simpler and yet somehow more elegant way of putting the same definition was offered by Scott Thomson, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals: "Leadership is best defined as 'getting the job done through people'." This definition means that two things are necessary for effective leadership: accomplishment (getting the job done) and influencing others (through people). These two are intertwined. An ability to get things done makes leaders more influential.

A study by James Balderson revealed that teachers were influenced most by principals who had "expert power," a term that simply means competence. These teachers were not influenced by the principal's power to punish, by his or her status or position, or even by the power to reward. They were influenced by their perception that the principal was an expert, was competent, could get the job done. The goal of this book is to give school administrators more "expert power" by helping them become more competent at what they do. And a theme that recurs in many chapters of this book is that the leader's competence is most clearly manifest in the ability to empower and inspire others.

Leadership for a Purpose

At this point we must ask some important questions: Influence for what? Leadership to what? School administrators who are concerned only about the monthly paycheck or even personal job satisfaction are not true educational leaders because they have lost sight of the true goals of education. Thomas Sergiovanni reminds us of this when he says, "Leadership skills are important, but they cannot bring genuine leadership if the leader does not have a sense of purpose and direction." Of course, those who want only money or a "fun job" do not become educational leaders. Those who do become educational leaders care about something else—educational excellence, which is the "purpose and direction" of which Sergiovanni speaks.

Yet there is a great deal of disagreement about what "educational excellence" is. The goals of education have been debated since ancient times and will continue to be debated by every generation to come. It is not the purpose of this book to address what those goals ought to be; rather, we are here concerned with leadership as one of the key means to achieve them. Lest we become ensnared by utilitarianism, however, we do well to heed Sergiovanni's warning that such goals must not be forgotten.

Indeed, no leader can succeed without a clear notion of where he or she is going. As Bennis and Nanus put it,

> The absence or ineffectiveness of leadership implies the absence of vision, a dreamless society, and this will result, at best, in the maintenance of the status quo or, at worst, in the disintegration of our society because of lack of purpose and cohesion.

Successful school leaders, say David Dwyer and his colleagues, have an "overarching vision" of the kinds of schools they want to help create, and they formulate their routine daily activities and interactions with teachers, students, and communities with that vision in mind. Communicating the purpose and the mission of the school through both words and actions, is one of the most important tasks of a school leader.

Linda Sheive and Marian Schoenheit liken the leader's vision of an excellent school to a physician's "understanding of the healthy, well-functioning body." On the basis of this vision or "template" of what a healthy school looks like, the leader looks for any evidence of a malady in the organization and then conceives of a prescription to remedy the situation. We hope that this book will help many a school leader both in forming a vision of a healthy school and in searching for an appropriate prescription when improvement becomes necessary.

Leadership and Effective Schools

Another way to express the goal of educational leadership is "effective schools." Like educational excellence, this term can be defined in many ways; but no matter how it is defined, research has revealed that good leadership is important to achieve it. In response to those who see principals and superintendents as mere functionaries or facilitators has come research to show that school leaders have great effects on schools, that it very much matters what school leaders do, who they are, and how they operate.

Gilbert Austin, after reviewing studies of school effectiveness in New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, summarized the factors that distinguish effective schools from others. The first four factors in his list reveal the importance of the role of principal.

- Strong principal leadership (for example, schools "being run" for a purpose rather than "running" from force of habit);
- Strong principal participation in the classroom instructional program and in actual teaching;
- Higher expectations on the part of the principal for student

and teacher performance advancement;

- Principals felt that they had more control over the functioning of the school, the curriculum and program, and their staff.

This evidence suggests that principals can and do have influence over what happens in schools and that this influence has real and measurable effects. Again, we point out that this kind of influence is precisely what we mean by leadership in this book.

James Lipham and John Daresh reviewed a number of studies done on individually guided elementary (IGE) schools and discovered principles that can be extended not only to other innovative schools but to all types of schools. One study found that "instrumental, supportive, and participative leadership" on the part of the principal was related to an effective instructional program. Another found that the leadership behavior of the principal (in particular "work facilitation, support interaction facilitation, and goal emphasis") increased job satisfaction in the school. Clearly, the principal's behavior does make a difference.

Ronald Edmonds, too, reviewed studies done on effective schools and found leadership to be a key factor. In his summary of the "indispensible characteristics" of effective schools, he listed as first "strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can be neither brought together nor kept together." He saw leadership as not only important, but the most important factor in school effectiveness.

This emphasis on the importance of the role of the school administrator is not new. In 1971, Keith Goldhammer and his colleagues looked at the differences between outstanding schools (called "beacons of brilliance") and extremely poor schools (called "potholes of pestilence").

> In the "beacons of brilliance," the principals are charismatic leaders; they seem to instill enthusiasm in their teachers. The teaching staffs seem to be working as teams because their morale was high, their services extend beyond normal expectations. Teachers and principals, along with parents, constantly appraise the effectiveness of the schools in an attempt to devise new programs and strategies to overcome deficiencies. Programs of study are adaptable and emphasis in the instructional program is placed on children's needs. Principals are confident they can provide relevant, purposeful learning without having to lean on traditional crutches.

The "potholes of pestilence" were just the opposite, the result, these authors maintain, of weak leadership and official neglect.

Perhaps this report from the Senate Select Committee on Equal Education Opportunity says it best:

> In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. He is the person responsible for all of the activities that occur in and around the school building. It is his leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning,

> the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. He is the main link between the school and the community and the way he performs in that capacity largely determines the attitudes of students and parents about the school. If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place; if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching; if students are performing to the best of their ability one can almost always point to the principal's leadership as the key to success.

How This Book Was Written

The purpose of this book is not to present new views or the authors' views of leadership. The authors of these chapters have attempted instead to summarize and explain a large body of literature with which educational leaders want and need to be familiar. Although readers are encouraged to refer to the original sources cited in the bibliographies, a perusal of them makes it apparent that no busy administrator or student has time to read all these books and articles. Nevertheless, the sources are important and contain many ideas useful to administrators. To make these important works easily accessible, we have tried to present the best ideas briefly and succinctly. This technique of distilling the most useful and important ideas is called "information analysis."

The authors of this book are more than mere "translators" of information and ideas, however. As well as analyzing information, they also attempt to synthesize information, to show how theories and ideas are connected, to resolve conflicting views.

Perhaps the most important kind of information synthesis in this book is the integration of theory and practice. Many books have been written on leadership theories and almost as many concern the "how to" of leadership practice. Practitioners complain that the theoretical writing is not useful in their everyday work, and researchers and theoreticians look askance at "practical" works whose ideas and suggestions are not empirically validated. Practitioners perceive that researchers and theoreticians are too isolated from the real problems of schools, that theories validated in laboratory settings may disintegrate in actual classrooms. Researchers and theoreticians argue that recommendations that are validated by only the experience of one administrator or one school are much too subjective to be useful to others.

Few books try to integrate these two conflicting views. This book tries to present the most useful aspects of theory along with the most thoughtful recommendations for action. A synthesis of the two, especially in areas where findings agree, can avoid many of the problems inherent in each single approach.

As well as presenting theories gleaned from educational literature and suggesting practices that might be derived from these theories, the book also contains ideas from practitioners within the field. These ideas are taken not only from written works, but, in many chapters, from interviews with administrators who are struggling with actual problems in schools.

Overview

This volume looks at leadership from three perspectives: the person, the structure, and the skills. Chapters focusing on the person who holds a leadership position provide something of a theoretical background. These chapters answer the questions, Who is today's educational leader? What makes an effective leader different from a less effective leader? What is a leadership style and what is the best one to use? How are school leaders trained, and what are the best methods for hiring them and inducting them into their positions? What are the particular problems faced by women and minority educational leaders or would-be leaders?

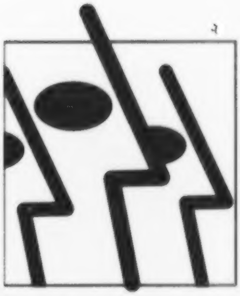
The part of the volume focusing on the structure takes a look at the systems or support structures that underlie school leadership. It examines the balance of authority between the central office and the school site, the team approach to management, the context for making wise decisions, and the components of school climate. These chapters concern structures and management systems that can make good educational leadership possible—or impossible.

The chapters on leadership skills highlight the abilities needed by administrators to be effective leaders in education today. Foremost among those abilities are knowing how to lead the school's instructional program and manage the instructional staff. This part of the volume also looks at such knotty problems as how to communicate in today's more open, power-sharing organization, how to build coalitions of community groups for the support of schools, how to lead meetings more efficiently and effectively, how to manage time and avoid an overdose of stress, and how to manage conflict.

This book is called a handbook because it is designed to be used as a reference when particular problems and concerns arise as well as to be read straight through. Those concerned about communication or decision-making or the effects of leadership styles can turn directly to the appropriate chapters for the information they are seeking without reading the previous chapters. It is a book to be sampled, to be digested slowly, and to be turned to again and again as leaders grow in their leadership skills and effectiveness. It is hoped that those charged with leading the nation's schools and those who aspire to this role will find the handbook useful as a source of encouragement and practical counsel.

Part 1

The Person



Chapter 1

Portrait of a Leader

Jo Ann Mazzarella and Thomas Grundy

What makes a good leader? Some cynics (perhaps they are realists) might respond: white males of the protestant persuasion. If these leaders reside in the American East, they would be those whose ancestors came across on the Mayflower; if they live in the West, they would be those whose ancestors, braving deprivation and death, rolled across the purple plains in covered wagons. In other words, a leader is someone just like me, just a little better.

What are the qualities of a good leader? Well, a leader is trustworthy, loyal, courteous, kind—more of an Eagle than a Boy Scout, really. He wears the uniform of the state and the times, and he wears it well. Today that means his hair touches his ears and maybe his collar; his suit is well cut and accentuated by a somewhat wide and not-too-loud tie; and his penny loafers (an acceptable leftover from ivy-league collegiate days) are polished. The body underneath, of course, is toned by frequent evening workouts at the gym and lunchtime joggings. And he is still, usually, a he and white.

Flippant though this may seem, this portrait is fairly representative of the majority of leaders in U.S. society today.

Before we attempt a more serious abstract portrait of the leader, it is important to remember that the leader does not exist in a vacuum, but in an environment made up of people (subordinates and supervisors), who are acted upon by historical, philosophical, religious, cultural, social influences/assumptions/biases and who in turn bring these influences and pressures to bear when they interact with the "leaders." After all, leadership involves interaction; it is not simply the impersonal delegation of duties and responsibilities from machine to machine. No matter how objective and scientific our studies are or appear to be or how objective we try to be in our dealings with others, leadership remains a human activity. Hence, successful leaders must be ultimately aware that they are humans interacting with other humans at a given time and place.

What follows, then, is at best a picture, a still life, a portrait in time of what we *now* assume to be the qualities that make up a leader in *our* culture, for to be effective, a leader must be *of* this culture or at least preeminently aware of what makes up this culture. The effective leader must be aware of society's taboos and restraints as well as its loves and indulgences. It may well be arguable that a leader, to be effective, must share that belief structure.

As the way we act tells others much about "who we are" and "where we come from," so does how we define the words or terms we use. Daniel Duke puts it this way: "By identifying the properties associated with leadership, an understanding may be gained of prevailing structures of social meaning. How people make sense of leadership can tell us a great deal about how they regard themselves, their society, and the future." We would ask you to be aware, then, that in our attempt to define leadership and what makes a good leader, we will inevitably bring some of our own and our culture's biases and assumptions to bear.

After beginning with a brief history of research on the personal characteristics of leaders, we examine findings on such biographical factors as intelligence, birth order, childrearing variables, and socioeconomic background. Next we consider how leaders interact and communicate with people. Another set of findings deals with character qualities that distinguish effective from ineffective leaders; we look at leaders' goal orientations, their sense of personal security, and their proactivity. Finally, we outline the implications of all these findings for the selection, evaluation, and training of school leaders..

The Characteristics of Leaders

What kind of people become leaders? Those of high or average intelligence? The rich or the poor? Gregarious people or the strong, silent type?

And what kind of people make good or effective leaders? Those who follow the rules to the letter or those who stretch them a little? Those who are clearly aware of their goals or those who rely on their instincts? Secure people or those who are secretly insecure?

In the early twentieth century, leadership researchers concentrated almost solely on the personal traits of leaders. They studied the characteristics of Indian chiefs, football captains, or Girl Scout leaders and frequently came up with very different conclusions about leaders' characteristics.

They often then used these conclusions to make generalizations about all leaders. As each study about a different kind of leader uncovered new characteristics, the list of characteristics grew until it was too large to be of any use. Critics of the "trait" approach to leadership theory pointed to the unwieldy nature of the list and to the widely varied characteristics to substantiate their claim that there are no leader traits that will hold for all leaders. As Warren Bennis remarked of the leaders he studied, other than demonstrating certain similar abilities, they were "tremendously diverse. They were tall, short, fat, thin . . . . They evinced no common pattern of psychological makeup or background."

Indeed, after years of data collection, such trait theories were largely abandoned in favor of situational theories of leadership based on the belief that there are no inherent leadership traits, just leader styles or behaviors that may change radically from one situation to another. "Situationists" believe that a person who is a leader in one situation may be a follower in another. This means that traits useful in one situation may actually be disastrous in others. Hence, leaders are not born with any particular traits that determine leadership. Situationists have less interest in who a leader is than in what the leader does in a given situation or environment.

It may be a bit premature, however, to throw out trait research and theories. If looking at a large number of trait studies of different types of leaders yields some common traits or characteristics, then our conclusions may have some value. That only one study shows leaders are differentiated from the followers by intelligence does not mean much; if twenty studies about twenty different types of leaders show it, the findings are more convincing.

It also makes sense to use findings about a particular leader to make generalizations about this kind of leader alone. Each kind of leader has a number of unique characteristics. Studies about Girl Scout leaders are quite valuable to Girl Scout leaders—and those of school leaders most valuable to school leaders.

Recently research has turned again to leader traits and characteristics—this time to the characteristics of effective leaders. Unlike the older studies, which compared leaders with followers, the newer studies sought to find out what traits distinguish good leaders from poor leaders. To adherents of what could be called the "new trait theory" it very much matters who the leader is. These researchers have concluded that, regardless of the situation, some traits are characteristic of many effective leaders—or, at least, of effective educational leaders.

This renewed interest in the characteristics of effective leaders suggests that it may be time to look again at the early trait research to see what is worth saving and what implications it has for present leaders. Explored in these pages are the most significant findings of previous trait research and the findings of more recent research on educational leaders in an attempt to paint a portrait of what an effective leader looks like.

It is important to remember that none of this research reveals any single characteristic that determines leadership. Rather it suggests that there are groups or "constellations" of qualities that appear to correlate with leadership. Not all leaders have these traits, and not even all effective leaders have all of them. Many followers have many of them, and many more have a few of them. Yet people who have many of these characteristics do appear to have a better chance of being effective leaders than do those who have none.

These pages look at several kinds of leader characteristics: inherited traits and those that spring from early childhood experiences; attitudes toward and relationships with other people; and characteristic qualities that differentiate effective from ineffective leaders.

Readers may want to accompany this chapter with an imaginary checklist to see how they compare to this portrait of an effective leader.

Nature and Nurture

If leaders do have traits and characteristics that separate them from followers, these traits must be acquired somewhere. Some characteristics, like intelligence, are believed to derive from an as yet imperfectly understood combination of genetic endowment and early nurturing. Other characteristics, like ease in groups and cooperativeness, are believed to spring chiefly from parental influences. Endowments like socioeconomic status come solely from environmental factors, the family situation in which the leader was born.

Most if not all the modern researchers stress nurture over nature. For example, in their study of effective leaders, Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (1985) say it is a myth that "leaders are born, not made":

> Biographies of great leaders sometimes read as if they had entered the world with an extraordinary genetic endowment, that somehow their future leadership role was preordained. Don't believe it. The truth is that major capacities and competencies of leadership can be learned, and we are all educable, at least if the basic desire to learn is there and we do not suffer from serious learning disorders. Furthermore, whatever natural endowments we bring to the role of leadership, they *can* be enhanced; nurture is far more important than nature in determining who becomes a successful leader.

This is not to suggest that it is easy to learn to be a leader. There is no simple formula, no rigorous science, no cookbook that leads inexorably to successful leadership. Instead it is a deeply human process, full of trial and error, victories and defeats, timing and happenstance, intuition and insight. Learning to be a leader is somewhat like learning to be a parent or a lover; your childhood and adolescence provide you with basic values and role models. Books can help you understand what's going on, but for those who are ready, most of the learning takes place during the experience itself.

Other writers, too, stress the process of growing into leadership—that the "training" is carried out throughout adolescence and into adulthood, indeed into the jobs themselves. Reflecting on their studies of effective principals, Edward Wynne and R. Bruce McPherson state:

> The values and attitudes of principals that are identified as important in our research are not innate traits as much as they are acquired perspectives. They have developed over a lifetime of complex socialization and contact with varied role models. Furthermore, they have been tested and refined in the fire of institutional life.

In this section we explore the characteristics leaders acquire early in life, those they are born with or acquire from their early interactions with their parents. Many such traits or endowments have been investigated, but only a few repeatedly show a significant relationship with leadership.

Those who reject the trait theory of leadership are fond of listing, with amusement, the large number of leadership traits that have been identified. If every study turns up a different trait, they reason, perhaps none of the traits is really significantly correlated with leadership. Jack Speiss has put it:

> Scholars duly noted that leaders are older, taller, heavier, more athletic, better appearing, and brighter than followers. Leaders can be considered superior to followers in scholarship, knowledge, insight,

> originality, adaptability, initiative, responsibility, persistence, self-confidence, emotional control, sociability, diplomacy, tact, popularity, prestige, and cooperativeness.

Although such critics have gone too far in dismissing all leadership traits, there is an important warning implicit in their observations: it is crucial not to base generalizations about all leaders on isolated studies. Rather, to find *general* leadership traits it is necessary to look at the body of the research as a whole to see what traits appear again and again in different kinds of studies of different kinds of leaders.

IQ

In 1940, Charles Bird reviewed twenty studies exploring the personal characteristics of leaders. He found that seventy-nine different traits had been examined, with only a few looked at by more than one researcher, which dampened his enthusiasm considerably for any "trait theory" of leadership. One characteristic, however, that appeared repeatedly in studies of leaders was intelligence. In at least ten studies reviewed, the leaders were found to be, on the whole, more intelligent than their followers.

Bird warns, however, that the distinction is not absolute. He notes that there are many followers who are more intelligent than leaders and concludes that "intelligence, therefore, is a contributing factor to leadership, but taken by itself, without assistance from other traits, it does not account for leadership." It should also be remembered that such studies reveal statistical correlations only. That is, high intelligence and leadership appear to be often found together—more often than chance—but are not necessarily related as cause and effect.

Ralph Stogdill, looking at 124 studies of the characteristics of leadership, found 23 studies that showed leaders are usually brighter than followers. Although many of these studies were of child or student leaders, Stogdill felt that the results were applicable in other contexts. Yet Stogdill, too, warned that "there is considerable overlapping of intelligence test scores, indicating that superior intelligence is not an absolute requirement for leadership."

It might seem that the implications of these findings are that those with the highest IQs will always emerge as leaders. However, Bernard Bass (1960) has reviewed a number of studies that show things are not so simple. Bass found that leaders usually have higher intelligence than followers, but not too much higher. He found that leaders' intelligence is often only slightly above average for their respective groups. For example, in a group of mean IQ of 100, someone with an IQ of 160 has very little chance to emerge as leader of that group. Instead, the leader will have an IQ between 115 and 130. Bass ventured several possible explanations for this finding: a "too superior" leader might not be concerned with the group's problems; he or she might not share "interests or goals" with a group; the very intelligent leader might not be able to communicate with the group; and, finally, this sort of leader might exhibit ideas that are too radical to be acceptable to followers.

What Bass found to be true of leaders in general appears also to be true of leaders in education, according to Robert Wilson's study of effective Ohio superintendents. This study revealed that successful superintendents are intelligent and good students, but not "gifted."

Birth Order

Since intelligence is correlated with leadership, it makes sense that researchers would look in turn at other correlates of intelligence in an attempt to link them, too, with leadership and leadership potential. According to Bass, several research reviews indicate that the intelligence of the firstborn is less than that of the youngest of the family. Herbert Yahraes, however, looking at a number of other studies, found that firstborns got higher scores on intelligence than did younger children and that scores on intelligence tests grew worse as the number of children increased. According to these findings, the firstborn, rather than a younger child, would be more likely to become an adult leader because he or she is more likely to have the highest intelligence of the siblings.

Since the findings appear to be irreconcilable, it is more useful to look at other effects of birth order. Bass cites additional studies that report the oldest child as more socially maladjusted, more conservative, less aggressive, less self-confident, more introverted, and less inclined toward leadership than other children. Elizabeth Hurlock, too, in her work on child development, found that the oldest child lacks self-confidence and leadership qualities.

Bass guessed that one reason firstborns suffer from so many problems that inhibit leadership is that parents of firstborns are inexperienced and less secure in their marriage and finances. Another reason is that older children have to adjust to decreased attention. Hurlock cited parental overprotectiveness and anxiety about sickness and nursing as additional causes for the firstborn's insecurity.

These findings appear to contradict the popular view that the firstborn child is more success-oriented and achievement-oriented than the children born later. Yet as we shall see in later sections, this desire for success or achievement may not be as important a component as other characteristics—such as ability to deal with people or to be a nonconformist when necessary.

We might conclude from all this, as did Bass, that "all other things being equal, we expect the younger siblings to attempt more leadership as an adult that the older siblings to some slight extent."

Here again, it is important to remember that birth order alone (or any single characteristic) does not in any way determine or guarantee leadership ability. This is merely one of a combination of attributes and traits that make leadership more likely. Those who are firstborn ought not to be discouraged from attempting to realize their leadership capabilities. Firstborns who have many of the other characteristics described in this chapter have a good chance to be successful leaders.

Indeed, in some families the firstborn may be the child who is reared or treated in such a way as to most develop leadership abilities. For example, in stable, one-parent households (or even two-parent households where both parents work) the eldest child may be encouraged to take on leadership roles and thus may well acquire more leadership abilities than the younger siblings. Moreover, in extended families, where other adults are present to provide support for the new parents, the oldest child may not suffer from the lack of security and parental inexperience that hampers the parents of "nuclear" families.

Childrearing Variables

Bass reviewed a number of studies that uncovered childrearing techniques or styles that appear to be related to leadership. In one study, children who are allowed to participate in family decision-making are more resourceful, self-reliant, cooperative, and at ease in groups. Bass believes that such characteristics facilitate potential to be a successful leader.

Another study cited by Bass concluded that "sociability and cooperativeness" were greater when parents were clear and consistent, explained decisions to their children, offered opportunities for decision-making, had rapport with their children, and understood their children's problems. Bass believes that "sociability and cooperativeness" are important in the development of leadership potential.

Socioeconomic Variables

Stogdill found fifteen early studies (1904-1947) and nineteen later studies (1948-1970) that suggested leaders come from a higher socioeconomic background than do followers. These studies were done with a wide variety of leaders and followers.

Bass found the same. In spite of the myth that great presidents are born in log cabins, Bass noted that few U.S. presidents have come from lower socioeconomic groups. He also mentions a study that found that town leaders tend to be children of town leaders and that 70 percent of the fathers of businessmen are businessmen.

One indication that this correlation may apply to school administrators as well is found in the work of John Hemphill and colleagues. In their comparison of 232 elementary school principals to the population as a whole, these researchers found that disproportionately more were children of business or professional men and appreciably fewer were from laboring or farming families.

Going beyond the immediate family and into the community, Wynne and McPherson point to "an important preliminary hypothesis" that has emerged from their research: "good principals may tend to come from family and community environments which socialize them to the skills and values associated with fostering community and comfortably exercising strong authority."

To summarize these studies of biographical factors, there is good evidence that leaders have a higher (but not much higher) IQ than do followers and that leaders generally come from higher socioeconomic groups. Evidence concerning parenting styles indicates that leaders may be the products of more "liberal" parents. Evidence concerning birth order is less clear, but firstborns seem less likely to be leaders than do their siblings.

None of these characteristics—neither high IQ, nor birth order, nor status, nor liberal parents—is a guarantee of leadership ability. Nor are these the only qualities correlated with leadership. The most that can be said is that research shows that many—but not all—leaders have these qualities.

Person to Person

One finding to emerge repeatedly in studies of leaders, including studies of educational leaders, is that leaders are people oriented. They are outgoing and successful in dealing with people and they have good social and interpersonal skills. Such characteristics separate both leaders from nonleaders and effective from ineffective leaders.

A number of outstanding principals were interviewed by Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield. That successful leaders put a high importance on dealing with people is well illustrated by a statement made by the outstanding principal identified by Blumberg and Greenfield only as "John":

> If you want to cultivate kids you really have to care about them and convey that caring to them. You've got to be seen as more than just the guy who suspends kids from school. I try to talk to them in the halls, at ball games, in the cafeteria, in classrooms. I try to get to know as many of them by name as I can. In a large school that's tough, but a principal should know four or five hundred kids by name, even in a school of fifteen hundred.

Indeed, the leader by definition must work well with people; if not, then who's going to follow?

Social Participation

In their national study of the principalship, Richard Gorton and Kenneth McIntyre found that effective principals have as their strongest asset "an ability to work with different kinds of people having various needs, interests, and expectations." The researchers added:

> They seem to understand people, know how to motivate them, and how to deal effectively with their problems. It is primarily this factor, rather than a technical expertise, that caused the "significant others" to perceive these principals as accessible and effective administrators.

Keith Goldhammer and his colleagues, in a much earlier, but similar, study, identified principals of outstanding schools (institutions they labeled "beacons of brilliance"). These researchers found that principals of these good schools "had an ability to work effectively with people and to secure their cooperation." They also found that the principals "used group processes effectively and appeared to have intuitive skill and empathy for their associates."

The effectiveness of such an approach is illustrated by a statement from another of Blumberg and Greenfield's effective principals who spoke about his effort to work with teachers.

> The first year my expectations were that we would meet, talk about instruction, and get to know each other. It was just an opportunity to sit down and let each other know how we felt, the things that bugged us, and so forth. It was really something. For the first time they started to talk about caring what was going on in the school, not just in their own classroom.

Others, too, have stressed the importance of the principal's involvement. Shirley M. Hord and Gene E. Hall, for example, found that, in "facilitating instructional improvement," the most effective principals are those who are most actively involved. Labeling three principal styles in order of increasing effectiveness—responder, manager, initiator—they found that the initiator, the principal who was most actively involved with teachers, was the most effective.

What about successful superintendents? Sitting in the central office, are they too far removed from students, teachers, and parents to profit from good social skills and abilities? Apparently not. Robert Wilson, in a study of successful Ohio superintendents, found that the successful superintendent "is a very personable and friendly individual who believes in the importance of human relations skills and demonstrates them daily." Outstanding Ohio superintendents also participate widely in the community—in church, PTA, civic, social, and hobby clubs—because they depend heavily on face-to-face contact for building rapport with citizens. According to Wilson, the results of these public relations efforts are evident in the success these superintendents have with school bond elections, at the bargaining table, and in their relations with media representatives and schools boards.

This kind of interest in people is also uncovered in studies of other types of leaders. Charles Bird found several studies in which leaders were found to be more extroverted than were followers. Bird defined an *extrovert* as "a person who prefers to engage overtly in social activities, to manipulate the external world, to mix with people, to make decisions without regard for fine distinctions, to delight in action, or to show indifference to criticism."

Ralph Stogdill reviewed numerous earlier studies showing that leaders participate in more group activities than do followers. Many early studies, as a well as the later studies he looked at (after 1948), also show strong correlations between leadership and sociability. Thirty-five of these later studies uncovered positive findings regarding what he called "social characteristics"; he concluded that leaders are active participants in social activities. According to Stogdill, the studies suggested that leaders interact easily with a wide range of personalities and that their interaction is valued by others.

If sociability is correlated with leadership, children's future ability may be influenced by their social participation. Bernard Bass reports a study showing that if parents participate in social activities, children do also. Indeed, he makes involvement and participation a cornerstone to leadership:

> The member who talks and participates most actively in the group's activities is the one most likely to emerge as a leader. Leaders differ from followers in this ability to initiate and sustain interaction. (1981)

The more studies that are done on leaders and leadership, the more interaction is stressed. Leonard Sayles repeatedly stresses the importance of active involvement on the part of the manager:

> The conclusions are inescapable: managers are peripatetic; their working life is a never-ending series of contacts with other people. They must talk and listen, telephone, call meetings, plead, argue, negotiate.

Interaction, then, is central to leadership.

Communication

As well as being sociable or people-oriented, leaders appear to have aptitudes and skills that help them in social situations. They are born with verbal abilities and they have picked up the skills they need to interact well with others; they know how to communicate.

It appears possible that leaders are born with a natural facility for language. Bass cites a number of studies supporting "the proposition that successful leaders are apt verbally." Apparently, not only leaders in general, but effective school leaders in particular, are good at communicating. Gorton and McIntyre, in their study of the principalship, found that "significant others" (those knowledgeable about the principal's performance) see effective principals as strong in oral communication. Blumberg and Greenfield found in their indepth study of eight outstanding principals that, among the five characteristics they held in common, one was "extremely well-developed expressive abilities."

> All of these principals had very well-developed interpersonal skills and were able to communicate effectively in face-to-face interaction with a diverse range of individuals and groups.

In his study of effective innovative leaders, Warren Bennis identified communication as one of the five "competencies" each of these leaders evinced. And among the categories proposed by Wynne and McPherson as being "specifically related to on-the-job challenges faced by good principals" is one they call "communitarian values."

Of William Foster's three propositions concerning leadership, one is that "leadership is conditioned on language." A chief function of the leader, says Foster, is to clear away the distortions that enter language through some people's desire to maintain their domination and power.

> Poverty becomes the fault of the poor, and not of the economic system. And closer to home, student failure is put on the individual—lack of motivation, lack of ability, poor environment and so on, and this becomes a convenient mechanism for not examining the basic structure of schooling. Some labels are accurate, but others are not: leadership is telling the difference. Leadership involves the penetration of labels and communicative structures, of taking freely constituted democratic participation seriously, of assisting the growth of individuals caught in the cycle of domination through language.

Foster, then, would have us reexamine what we mean by communication and leadership. Roland Barth makes a similar point when he says that "we need to devise mechanisms in schools that will allow adults constantly to question embedded ways of doing things."

No matter how we look at it, communication—whether it be for the purpose of defending or maintaining the status—quo, penetrating labels and communicative structures, influencing, persuading, explaining—is central to leadership. This is especially true for an educational leader, whose end product (if you will) is people—in Keith Leithwood and Donald Montgomery's words, "the educated person as a self-directed problem solver."

Listening

Blumberg and Greenfield's outstanding principal known as John had this to say about listening:

> Teachers have to see you as caring, as listening to their problems. And after listening, you have to follow through so that teachers know you cared enough to do something and then communicate back to them. You may not follow through the way the teacher thought you should, but at least you did something. You heard the problem and you dealt with it in a way that you saw fit.

Blumberg and Greenfield note that the ability to listen was common to the effective principals they studied. These effective leaders were very sensitive to what was going on around them. They were not only good at communicating ideas, they were good at absorbing ideas, too. (Another way of saying this is that communication, if there is to really be any communication, is a two—way street.)

Goldhammer and his colleagues found that principals of outstanding schools "listened well to parents, teachers, and pupils." And Gorton and McIntyre as well found that effective principals listen to students, community, and staff.

Sayles lists seven "specific interaction skills" of business executives, one of which is

> Listening ability–the ability to remain silent over reasonably long

periods so that others can present a complex or highly emotional view and where others need a good listener in order to express delicate or embarrassing issues.

All this interrelated research points toward the same thing. One quality that makes leaders different from followers and good leaders different from poor leaders is the way they relate to people. Most true leaders enjoy social participation and do a lot of it, have well-developed communication skills, and are good listeners.

Character Qualities

Some research studies have suggested that effective educational leaders have particular character qualities that make them different from less effective leaders. These studies suggest that effective leaders (as well as having the good human relations skills described in the previous section) are goal oriented, energetic, secure, proactive, and well aware of the dynamics of power.

Two things make this more recent research on leadership traits even more valuable to school people than was the earlier trait research. The first is that current researchers are focusing on educational leaders only and looking for leadership characteristics that are unique to this group.

The second reason is that this research looks at the characteristics that separate effective from ineffective leaders. Rather than examining the traits that identified good leaders, early researchers looked only at the traits that distinguish leaders from nonleaders. By lumping good leaders in with bad, these early researchers made it unlikely that they would find any traits in common. Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander, among others, have suggested that studying instead the traits that distinguish effective from ineffective leaders may well have more valuable results.

In recent years, several studies have looked at one kind of leader—the school principal—and used the findings to make pronouncements about this kind of leader alone. These studies looked only at effective principals and tried to discern what makes them different from other principals.

Goals

Blumberg and Greenfield decided the best way to gather data about effective principals was to talk with them personally. They conducted lengthy indepth interviews with eight principals identified by teachers, parents, district administrators, and students as outstanding.

Following their detailed examination of these principals, Blumberg and Greenfield made several generalizations. One of these was that principals who are effective leaders seem to be "highly goal-oriented and to have a keen sense of goal clarity." The researchers noted that these effective principals "were continually alert for opportunities to make things happen, and if the opportunities didn't present themselves, they created them."

The effective principal whom Blumberg and Greenfield identified as Paul said it well:

> Once I took leadership, after that first year, I never relinquished the fact that I was their principal. I accepted the fact that I wasn't going to be their buddy. I accepted the idea that I was going to take some flack for things I had not done; I accepted the idea that if there were screw-ups I'd take the responsibility for them but that I would also take the role of making final decisions when necessary. And things changed from that point on.

He set clear goals for himself, for how he would act and present himself, for how he would behave in given situations.

In other words, effective principals have clear goals and will work hard to try to achieve them. Blumberg and Greenfield felt that almost every school principal has a number of goals for the school; yet for most, the mere espousal of goals appears to be enough and substitutes for action.

Blumberg and Greenfield were not the first to discern the importance of strong goal orientation. When Ralph Stogdill reviewed 163 studies of leaders between 1948 and 1970, one of the qualities that appeared often was "vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals." He discovered, too, that leaders in these studies had a "strong drive for task completion." On looking over all these studies, Stogdill observed that this characteristic "differentiates leaders from followers, effective from ineffective leaders, and higher echelon from lower echelon leaders."

Charles Bird, too, after looking at twenty studies of leadership, found that one of the five leader character qualities that was mentioned with frequency was "initiative." In their study of principal effectiveness, Leithwood and Montgomery concluded: "Goals are the long term aspirations held by principals for work in their school. No other dimension of principal behavior is more consistently linked to school improvement by current empirical research than Goals."

Indeed, virtually every current study of leadership that we have looked at emphasizes the importance, if not the centrality, of goals to being an effective leader. And when you think about it, it makes perfect sense. To lead means to take somebody someplace. If you do not know where you are going, you cannot really be leading someone "there." Hence, vision or the ability to visualize one's goals, is a prerequisite for leadership. As John Pejza states, "Without a vision to challenge followers with, there's no possibility of a principal being a leader."

Bennis identifies vision as one of the five most important characteristics of the effective leader. He defines vision as "the capacity to create and communicate a compelling vision of a desired state of affairs, a vision (or paradigm, context, frame—all those words serve) that clarifies the current situation and induces commitment to the future." One who leads, then, must know where one is as well as where one is going.

Of course, it is not the mere presence of a goal, but the kind of goal, that establishes the leader's effectiveness. Leithwood and Montgomery made the important discovery that the most effective principals were those who had undergone a process of growth wherein their concerns and goals shifted "from personal needs through interpersonal relations to the school program and finally to student achievement."

A principal operating from a "personal needs" orientation might enter the profession largely for its prestige or financial rewards. This leader might spend a great deal of time worrying about personal advancement and schedule activities and delegate authority to free up time or reduce his or her responsibility.

At the next level, the principal might concentrate on being friends with everyone, taking a make-no-waves approach that could jeopardize students' educational needs. At the third level, even though the focus is on the school program, students may still get lost in the bureaucratic shuffle. At the highest level, however, where student achievement is the basic goal, the students' welfare does not get set aside. After all, the purpose of school is to educate students.

It is clear, then, that effective school leaders are people of action. They have the ability to establish, visualize, and clearly communicate goals—goals that are ambitious and specifically tied into student improvement.

Security

Blumberg and Greenfield also found that effective educational leaders are secure; that is, they are not threatened by new ideas or confrontations with others. "Their sense of themselves as people and what it is they are about seems rather highly developed." The authors believe that this sort of security and sureness about themselves fosters a high tolerance for ambiguity. They can survive in a confusing situation where rules are ill-defined. They can live with uncertainty. This tolerance for ambiguity means effective leaders are not afraid of positive change.

There is a similarity between these findings and those of Keith Goldhammer and his colleagues, who made this comment about principals of effective schools:

> The ambiguities that surround them and their work were of less significance than the goals they felt were important to achieve. As a result, they found it possible to live with the ambiguities of their position.

Openness, security, and tolerance for ambiguity seem to make successful administrators unafraid of change when it is needed. This ability to change and to effect necessary change is of paramount importance for a leader. Indeed, James Lipham defines *leadership* as "that behavior of an individual which initiates a new structure in interaction within a social system." Note the interdependency of the "parts" of leadership: to initiate change implies to have goals, which, if they are visualized, have more chance of being effected.

Proactivity

One outstanding principal interviewed by Blumberg and Greenfield was faced with a seemingly unsolvable problem. His desire for student input into school committees was blocked by teachers who threatened to resign from committees that had student members. His solution?

> The answer to this situation was an end run. We formed a Parent-Teacher-Student Council, which was outside the formal organization of the school, but it wasn't a tea and cookies PTA. We met to discuss problems that involved parents, teachers, and students. Primarily, it was a sounding board for faculty meetings and departmental chairmen. It worked.

Blumberg and Greenfield noted that their effective principals do not merely accept all the rules and customs that make up "the way things are." They are "proactive," always testing the limits in an effort to change things that no one else believes can be changed. "Leadership," says John Pejza,

> requires a vision, a sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo, a hunger to see improvement. When you have a vision, you make a mental journey from the known to the unknown, and you create the future from a montage of current facts, hopes, dreams, dangers, and opportunities. . . . A leader continuously scans the environment noticing where change is needed. As someone has said, a successful leader is one who aims at something no one else can see and hits it.

Yet leaders do not take foolish risks and do take care to establish a power base, which for principals means gaining support from significant groups both inside and outside the school. Effective leaders are aware of the need to establish alliances to get things done. Blumberg and Greenfield emphasize that their principals are strongly aware of the dynamics of power.

Goldhammer and his research team, too, discovered that the most successful principals "found it difficult to live within the constraints of the bureaucracy; they frequently violated the chain of command, seeking relief for their problems from whatever sources that were potentially useful." Nevertheless, they "expressed concern for the identification of the most appropriate procedures through which change could be secured."

Similarly, Wynne and McPherson argue that one of the categories or traits of an effective principal is "courage," by which they mean not so much physical daring (though that may not be irrelevant), but rather

> the willingness to consciously expose oneself to circumstances which may generate serious harmful consequences—either economic, emotional, or physical.

The research suggests that the leaders who follow rules to the letter, who never make waves and never challenge authority, are probably less effective than leaders who stretch the rules a little or fight to accomplish goals that are important to them. As Blumberg and Greenfield say,

> A characteristic of principals who lead seems to be that they behave in ways that enable *them to be in charge of the job* and *not let the job be in charge of them*. They are not pawns of the system. They seem to be adept at playing the games on which their survival depends, but they don't let the game playing consume too much of their energy.

It is clear that even though these effective leaders stretch the rules, they are not rebels; they *do* play the game. The studies agree that these leaders understand how power works and know how to survive.

Implications for Selection, Evaluation, and Training

Not all the findings about the characteristics of effective leaders reported in this chapter are simply and immediately applicable as selection and evaluation criteria and administrator training objectives. For example, training programs cannot alter characteristics that are inherent or acquired at an early age. And some traits that are desirable in leaders, such as proactivity, security, initiative, and tolerance for ambiguity, are difficult to measure.

Nevertheless, it is likely that we will never identify any characteristics required for being an effective leader that are easily measurable or teachable. As we learn more about leadership, it becomes clearer that there are no simple ways to identify it or foster it. Furthermore, it is beginning to be apparent that traditional methods of selection, evaluation, and training, though easy to implement, may not truly be relevant to the production of effective leaders. Blumberg and Greenfield found little to suggest that university graduate training had much direct or observable influence on any of the effective leaders they studied. They suggested a switch from "formal indices of competence" like years of teaching and administrative experience, number of advanced degrees, and grade point averages to more relevant measures of competence. Goldhammer and his colleagues likewise discovered that principals who were effective could not, on the basis of their formal preparation, be distinguished from those who were not.

Because the "values and attitudes" that help make a principal effective "develop over a lifetime of complex socialization," Wynne and McPherson argue that

> priority should be given to affect-oriented training, as compared to more cognitive approaches. In other words, persons being trained to become principals should be *socialized* into their potential roles, as compared to being *taught* about them.

Wynne and McPherson recommend "giving greater attention to background-oriented interviewing; fast track perspectives in advancement (for appropriate candidates); and an 'officer candidate type' socialization process."

Even though the characteristics of effective leaders are difficult to measure or teach, we have to make some effort to use them in evaluation, selection, and training simply because they are better than the methods we are now using. Some possible applications, outlined below, come to mind.

Selection and Evaluation

One finding in the section on Nature and Nurture can be helpful in administrator selection. It does seem desirable that some minimal level of intelligence be demanded for admission into administrator jobs or training programs. Kenneth St. Clair and Kenneth McIntyre have suggested that the work of researchers like Stogdill lends "credence to our long-held notion that ignoramuses should be selected out of preparation programs." Although there are those who would argue the irrelevance of such tests as analogies tests or the Graduate Record Examination, St. Clair and McIntyre believe that the results coordinate closely enough with intelligence to be valid selectors of candidates for administrator training programs.

St. Clair and McIntyre do not worry that using such selection criteria might encourage the selection of administrators who are too intellectually superior to their subordinates to be effective. They believe that there have been "too few occasions to test this finding in educational settings to accept it as a cause for concern." And beyond this lack of evidence, one flinches at the prospect of rejecting applicants because they are *too* intelligent.

Another criterion that can be applied in the selection and evaluation of administrators is their communication skills. Prospective administrators can be given paper and pencil tests that measure verbal ability and extroversion. The personal interview would appear to be especially helpful in gauging how well job candidates or current administrators communicate and listen. Superiors, subordinates, and peers might give administrators or applicants for administrative programs evaluations on how well they get along with and understand the problems of different kinds of people. Although this smacks a little bit of a popularity contest, the research reviewed here strongly suggests that administrators who have trouble dealing with people are going to have a much harder time being effective leaders.

In choosing teachers and administrators for promotion, superiors ought to look for those who need little supervision and who accomplish a lot. Too often, those who are promoted are those who do what they're told and do everything by the book. Rather, those who are given positions of leadership ought to be those with initiative and minds of their own. They ought to be those who have clear goals, can articulate them, and have shown concrete evidence of progress at moving toward those goals.

Although feelings of inner security are probably too complex to be measured during selection procedures, it seems possible that attitudes toward change can be elicited and assessed, and actual changes initiated can be measured.

Training

Training programs might do well to put strong emphasis on improving communication skills, both listening and verbal expression. Training programs ought also to accentuate the importance of being a good communicator; they can emphasize that time spent "merely" communicating is never lost and pays off in leadership effectiveness.

Although training programs are not likely to inculcate initiative in those who haven't got it, they can encourage those who are naturally endowed with initiative not to be afraid to use it. Often, training programs, rather than fostering personal initiative, squelch it through an overabundance of rules, structures, and regulations that do not leave room for personal goal-setting. As in the case of initiative, training programs are not capable of instilling feelings of security, but they can emphasize an openness toward change and the importance of the leader's role as change agent.

Finally, it is important to remember that evidence of certain traits does not guarantee that we have a leader. As Daniel Duke has said,

> It is conceivable that there are individuals who manifest all the behaviors associated with leadership, yet fail to embody leadership. Those who attempt to "train" leaders long have recognized this problem. Some master all the necessary operations—from planning to decision making—but they do not convey the impression of leadership.

Leadership seems to be a *gestalt* phenomenon, greater than the sum of its behavioral parts.

Conclusion

A small part of the portrait of the effective educational leader has been revealed by each of the research studies and reviews mentioned here. Now, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, all the fragments can be assembled to reveal a more coherent (though by no means complete) portrait of an effective educational leader. The early research revealed not characteristics that separate effective from ineffective leaders, but characteristics that separate most leaders from followers.

According to this research, typical educational leaders are a little more intelligent (but not too much more) than nonleaders. As children they were probably not firstborn and were probably allowed at an early age to make many of their own decisions. It is likely that they came from a higher socioeconomic group than did their followers.

The later research surveyed here fills in the outlines a bit and fleshes out a portrait of a more specific kind of leader—an effective educational leader. According to these findings, effective educational leaders are outgoing, good at working with people, and have good communication abilities and skills. They take initiative, are aware of their goals, and feel secure. As proactive people, they are not afraid to stretch the rules, but also understand the compromises that must be made to get things done.

More of a sketch than a portrait, this depiction of an educational leader leaves out a great deal. Even more important, the sketch itself is not of a real leader but only of an imaginary one. The leader whose characteristics are set down here is a pure "form," who in actuality does not exist. Like the typical voter or the typical consumer, the typical leader is only a composite of common characteristics. No real flesh and blood counterpart exists. The real effective leaders interviewed by Blumberg and Greenfield and others were more different than they were alike.

Then what is the point of an imaginary portrait of a nonexistent leader? Although we cannot hang it on the wall, this composite has several possible uses. As a reflection of our own culture and times, it can perhaps teach us much about ourselves, our conceptions and preconceptions. But more specifically, or more to our immediate purposes, it can help us recognize potential leaders by determining if they have many (but not necessarily all) of these characteristics.

Another use is for evaluation. Those who evaluate administrators can use this portrait to help formulate evaluation criteria. This imaginary portrait can also be used for self-evaluation. Those who are in leadership positions can compare themselves with more effective leaders to see how they measure up.

Also, knowing the characteristics of an effective leader can be useful in planning administrator training programs, as a guide to which aspects of the job ought to be emphasized.

Finally, the most important use for this ideal portrait is to help leaders set priorities. When things get rough and they are tempted to lock themselves in their offices, such a vision can remind them that human relations and communication skills *are* important. When they are coasting along, day-by-day, not going anywhere in particular, it can remind them that being goal-oriented and knowing where they are going *does* make a difference. When they are criticized by superiors for breaking unnecessary rules and cautioned not to make waves, it can give them the courage to continue doing things their own way—as long as that way has been successful in accomplishing their highest priorities. In short, the most important use for this portrait is the function performed by any ideal. It can caution us while at the same time offering us something to strive for.

Chapter 2

Leadership Styles

Jo Ann Mazzarella and Stuart C. Smith

In an era when school leaders must focus their energies on providing an excellent education for all students, the high achievers as well as those who are at risk, and do so with limited financial resources, a concern for leadership style may seem at best academic and at worst a waste of time. What is a leadership style and why does it matter?

Reduced to its simplest terms, a leadership style is the way a leader leads. In a chapter on the principal's leadership behavior, Thomas Sergiovanni and David Elliott speak of the "ways in which the principal expresses leadership, uses power and authority, arrives at decisions, and in general interacts with teachers and others." These activities—some of the most important things school administrators do—have enormous implications for their effectiveness. If leaders choose inappropriate ways of leading, they will often fail to accomplish the task at hand, reach long-range organizational goals, or maintain positive relationships with subordinates. These kinds of failure can lead to ultimate loss of position or loss of peace of mind.

Although most authors on leadership style agree that it is an important component of leadership and something leaders ought to become aware of, there is very little more that they agree about. Experts disagree about the major elements of leadership style, about whether the leader can change his or her style, and whether personality traits have any effect on style.

All this disagreement is very confusing and not very helpful to those who must work in leadership positions everyday. Leaders want to know what leadership styles are effective, and where, how they can become better leaders, what kind of leadership training is useful, and how to select coworkers and subordinates who have the ability to become good leaders.

Although at this state there are no definitive right answers to these style dilemmas, this chapter is written with these practical, everyday needs of leaders in mind. An attempt is made to present the elements of leadership style theory that have useful and helpful implications for administrators. Near the end of the chapter is a section that states some practical implications of each of the major leadership style theories; the theme is how to select, to train, and to be a better leader.

History of Style Theory

Views of leadership have changed radically over the last fifty years.

The earliest leadership research tried to determine what makes a leader and what makes a good leader by examining the inherent traits of leaders. After the collection of leadership traits became too large to manage or make sense of, researchers began to focus on leadership behavior, on what leaders do in their capacities as leaders. The assumption was that leadership was something almost anyone could accomplish if he or she took the trouble to learn how it was done effectively.

The concept of leadership style was born, and the research began to focus on which leadership style was best, often comparing autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire styles. Although democratic styles frequently appeared to be the most effective, the theory began to emerge that no style of leadership was best in all situations. Situational theories of leadership style then appeared on the scene, introducing the idea that the most effective style would fit the situation at hand.

In later years the view that leadership is merely a behavior (like swimming or running) that anyone can learn has been modified. New studies of effective leaders suggest that effective leadership results from an interaction of behaviors and inherent traits. In other words, leadership ability is partly learned and partly inborn.

Categories of Styles

It seems logical that leadership style does not include everything a leader does or thinks; the way the leader sharpens pencils is not a facet of leadership style nor are particular religious beliefs. Which activities and beliefs should be focused on when assessing one's own or someone else's style?

One superintendent may let staff make most of the decisions about how the district is run; another superintendent may feel that she alone has the expertise and ability to make important decisions. One principal may try to motivate teachers with rewards and punishments; another may view teachers as self-starting. One supervisor may emphasize clear job descriptions; another may establish warm relationships with employees. One principal may push teachers to implement new programs; another may respond to teachers' initiatives. These contrasting types of leaders suggest some of the major dimensions for comparing leadership styles.

Who Makes Decisions?

Decision-making is an important component of leadership style. Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones are both principals who are faced with massive budget cuts. Mr. Smith spends the weekend alone in his office wrestling with the budget. At Monday afternoon's faculty meeting he announces what and whom must be cut. Mr. Jones, however, uses the Monday meeting to explain the problem, ask for suggestions as to what might be cut, and then call for a voice vote on each suggestion.

These two leaders would be called the "autocrat" and the "consultative manager" by Thomas Bonoma and Dennis Slevin, who have identified four leadership styles based on where the authority for decisions is placed and where information about the decision comes from.

Another example of leadership style might be Mrs. Green (the consultative "autocrat") who asks for faculty suggestions and then makes the decision alone or Mr. Blue (the "shareholder") who elicits no information exchange from his faculty but leaves it up to them to make the decision. From these examples, it remains clear that how people habitually make decisions is one component of leadership style.

Another way of looking at and classifying the dimensions of leadership style has been proposed by Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt, who see leadership style as a continuum stretching from "subordinate-centered" to "boss-centered." The most subordinate-centered leadership involves giving subordinates great freedom to make decisions within very flexible limits. With the most boss-centered leadership, the manager alone makes the decision and either merely announces it or attempts to "sell" the decision. While Tannenbaum and Schmidt admit that there are times when more boss-centered leadership is necessary, clearly they see subordinate-centered behavior as the most effective. They advocate making a continuing effort to confront subordinates with the "challenge of freedom."

Are Employees Viewed as Lazy or Motivated?

As well as differing about who makes decisions, leaders may also vary in the way they view employees. One principal may see staff members as lacking in motivation, needing to be constantly pushed, and holding their own interest above that of the school. Another principal may assume that staff are just the opposite: motivated to improve the school, self-starting, and giving prime importance to school needs.

This way of classifying leaders' views of employees is found in the writing of Douglas McGregor, who formulated the now famous concept of Theory X and Theory Y. McGregor believed each person holds one of two opposing theories of human behavior. One, Theory X, holds that people are basically lazy, need to be prodded to action, and are motivated only by material or other rewards and punishments. The other, Theory Y, holds that people enjoy accomplishment, are self-motivated (except when thwarted), and have a desire to make a real contribution to their organization.

McGregor classified leaders as following either Theory X or Theory Y, with Theory Y leaders cast as modern, enlightened, humanitarian, and compassionate leaders who succeed in motivating people.

According to McGregor, each view of human nature is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If one treats workers as being responsible and self-motivated, they will be. If one treats them as lazy or without motivation, they will be that too. A realization that this is so has been the basis of a movement toward more democratic determination of organizational objectives and participative management as part of an attempt to increase employee commitment to organizational goals.

McGregor's theories have made an important contribution toward making leadership more humanistic. Yet some critics have maintained that too much participative management can impede accomplishment of organizational goals. One of these, Philip DeTurk (headmaster of Shepherd Knapp School in Massachusetts) expressed his fears that leaders who insist on always sharing power may be abdicating their responsibility to meet the institution's needs for authority, may be endangering their own health through personal overcommitment to time-consuming decision-making practices, and may be ignoring the urgency of month-to-month financial survival.

DeTurk feels that McGregor himself came to a similar conclusion in a speech he gave when resigning as president of Antioch College.

> I thought that maybe I could operate so that everyone would like me, that "good human relations" would eliminate all discord and agreement. I couldn't have been more wrong. It took a couple of years, but I have finally begun to realize that a leader cannot avoid the exercise of authority any more than he can avoid the responsibility for what happens to his organization.

In spite of the undeniable value of McGregor's theories, it may be that too slavishly dedicating oneself to Theory Y-oriented leadership in the organization may cause decision-making to be slighted and the survival of the individual leader or the organization to be threatened. The balance is a difficult one.

Is the Focus on People or Work?

Some people have more interest in what they are doing than in the people with whom they are working. Others give more importance to their relationship with coworkers than to the job. Whether one emphasizes the task or human relations is often thought to be central to leadership style.

For leaders, an important aspect of the task at hand often includes establishing ways of doing things, channels of communication, or organizational patterns. Andrew Halpin (along with Ralph Stogdill and others at The Ohio State University) called such activities "initiating structure." He found that effective leaders place a lot of importance on initiating structure. But he found, too, that they are also very much concerned about their relationships with people. Effective leaders evidenced a lot of behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth. Halpin called this kind of behavior "consideration."

In a study of fifty Ohio superintendents, Halpin found that both school board members and staff saw superintendents' leadership effectiveness as made up of behavior characterized by high scores on initiating structure and consideration. Ineffective superintendents had low scores in each.

It is hard to balance work concerns and people concerns. In fact some experts claim it is impossible. Fred Fiedler, who called these dimensions "task-orientation" and "relationship-orientation," believed that leaders were able to focus on either one or the other but not both. He saw task-orientation and relationship-orientation as two ends of a continuum (like thin and fat or tall and short) and believed it logically impossible to be at both ends of the continuum.

In the research on his "contingency theory" (described in detail later in this chapter), Fiedler ascertained that leaders who described their "least preferred coworker" in positive terms were "human relations oriented," whereas those who described the least liked coworker in negative terms were "task oriented." (The nature of the instrument used to measure the attitude toward this coworker did not allow for leaders who had both orientations.) Fiedler believed that both styles could be effective.

Are task orientation and human relations orientation mutually exclusive? Some authors, such as Sergiovanni, side with Fiedler in answering yes. William Reddin is an example of other writers who, siding with Halpin, answer no. Reddin saw four possible combinations of orientation: human relations orientation alone, task orientation alone, both of these orientations together, and neither one. Reddin believed that any one of these four styles could be effective depending on the situation. When to use which style is discussed in the next major section.

Do Leaders Initiate or Respond?

Still another dimension for comparing leaders' styles is how they go about implementing changes in their organizations. Light was shed on this aspect of style by a series of studies at the (now defunct) Research and Development Center for Teacher Education in Austin, Texas. Shirley Hord and Gene Hall explain that when researchers compared the relative success of nine elementary schools in implementing new curriculum programs, the only variable that accounted for differences among the schools was the leadership style of the principals.

Schools having the greatest success were led by "initiators"—principals who formulated a vision for the school and pushed teachers to implement policies and practices that would help students achieve, say Hord and Hall. At the other end of the spectrum, principals of schools that had the least success in implementing the new programs were "responders." They "are easily distinguished from the other styles by their preoccupation with the feelings of others and their inclination to let others supply the energy and take the lead."

A third style of principals, "managers," presided over schools that had moderate success. Because a manager's primary motivations are to protect teachers from being burdened by too many tasks and to make sure that things are "done right," they tend to take on more responsibility for interventions themselves.

The three styles are not mutually exclusive; in fact, all principals embody varying elements of each style. Hord and Hall say "the three styles can be viewed as positions on a continuum of style." Although few individuals would "fit exactly into one particular style...it appears that every change facilitator does have a predominant style that tends to persist through time and varying circumstances."

In another article by members of the research team, Gene Hall and his colleagues hesitate about making judgments as to which style is most effective. Although initiators were more effective than other principals in implementing new programs, teachers preferred the climate in schools led by managers. Moreover, none of the schools failed to implement the programs, which were actually used by all the teachers. "The role of the principal in the school improvement process must be viewed in terms of the many factors that affect it rather than naively assuming that a quick cure can be made simply by changing one variable, such as the change facilitator style of the principal," say Hall and his coauthors. "School life is much richer and more complex than that."

Another researcher who has examined the connection between principals' style and success in implementing innovations is Cecil Miskel. He found that those principals who tended to be risk takers (or had low security needs) were more successful at innovative efforts—at least when they also had fewer years of experience and worked in a school that used innovative management techniques.

Is success at innovation the same as success as a leader? Hall and his colleagues warn against too quickly equating the two. But their findings about initiators and Miskel's findings about risk-takers take on added significance when one recalls that James Lipham defined leadership as "that behavior which initiates a new structure in interaction within a social system." This definition is not just an idle theory; good leaders are always making things better. Implicit in the word leader is the idea of movement from one place to another. Leaders are not leaders when they are standing still.

William Holloway and Ghulam Niazi related risk-taking propensities of school administrators to Fiedler's concept of leader control over the situation. Holloway and Niazi found that the more control school principals had over their work situation, the greater their disposition to take risks. They concluded that leaders' willingness to take risks can be increased by improving the leader's status or group support.

The Limits of Categories

In this section, we have discussed a number of ways of looking at leadership style. Some stress decision-making styles, some stress views of human behavior, others stress whether leaders are more interested in the people or the job, and still others stress how leaders facilitate change. Although some of these theories are overlapping, they are not identical, and some directly conflict with each other.

Moreover, these views of leadership style are broad categories that are helpful only in introducing the topic. As we shall see, some other theories, such as those that focus on the maturity level of followers, do not fit conveniently in one of these categories. Effective leaders also vary their styles in response to such factors as community expectations, organizational climate and culture, and certain aspects of the task, such as timelines and available resources.

All these different views of leadership necessitate a choice. Administrators must choose and make use of the theories that best fit their experiences, situations, personalities, and, not least, intuitive perceptions of themselves and others.

The Ideal Style

Many leaders or would-be leaders puzzle over which leadership style is the most effective. Wanting to know the ideal way to approach leadership, they debate such issues as whether they should strive for subordinate-centered leadership or boss-centered leadership, whether they should base their leadership on Theory X or Theory Y, whether they should concentrate on the task or human relations, or whether they should initiate changes or respond to subordinates.

Some researchers on leadership style maintain that these dilemmas are not only unsolvable, but also the wrong questions to ask. These researchers believe that there is no ideal approach to leadership that fits all situations; rather, the best view of leadership style is that it must vary to fit the particular situation at hand.

While some leaders swear by the importance of relationship-oriented leadership and others proclaim the importance of a task-oriented style, Fiedler, using his contingency theory, maintains that either one of these styles can be appropriate, depending on the amount of control the leader has over the situation (sometimes called how "favorable" a situation is). Fiedler sees three important components in situational control: status or position power of the leader, quality of relations between the leader and members, and structure of the task. Fiedler's extensive research reveals that when a leader is extremely influential or extremely uninfluential, the most effective style will be a task-oriented style. Relationship-oriented leaders are more effective in the situations that fall in between.

What Is the Situation?

Many authorities agree with Fiedler's view that the leadership style needed depends on the situation. Many disagree, however, about what the important elements of the situation are. Whereas Fiedler saw three important elements in the situation (status, leader-member relations, and task structure), William Reddin sees five important elements: organizational philosophy, technology (or how the work is done), the superior, the coworkers, and the subordinates.

Reddin identified four possible styles that were combinations of task-oriented behavior and relationship-oriented behavior. "Integrated style" is style that emphasizes both relationship-oriented and task-oriented behavior. "Separated" style is deficient in both. "Related" style emphasizes relationship-oriented behavior but neglects task-oriented. "Dedicated" style emphasizes task but neglects relationship.

Reddin believed that each one of these four styles (even separated style) could be effective or ineffective depending on the situation, and he coined descriptive terms to describe the possible managerial types embodying the eight effective and ineffective styles. For example, the "autocrat" uses the dedicated (high task, low relationship) style inappropriately and is ineffective as a leader; the "benevolent autocrat" uses the dedicated style appropriately and is an effective leader. Figure 1 shows the effective and ineffective manifestations of each style.

Reddin explained that an appropriate time to use the dedicated style (or to be a benevolent autocrat) is when the manager knows more about the job than the subordinates do, when unscheduled events are likely to occur, when directions must be given, or where the subordinates' performance is easily measurable.

Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt describe "forces" a leader should consider in deciding how to manage. Although some theorists would lump all these forces into the category "situational," Tannenbaum and Schmidt call them "forces in the manager," "forces in the subordinates," and "forces in the situation."

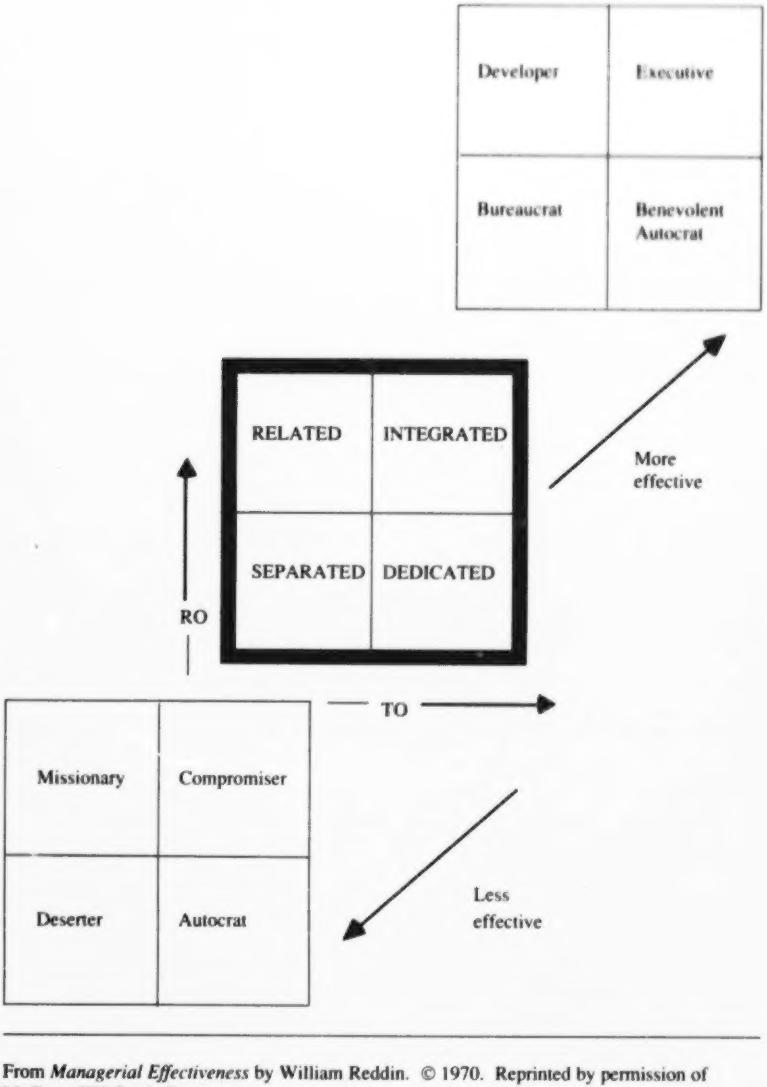
Forces within managers include their value systems (How do they feel about the worth of participative decision-making?), their confidence in subordinates, their inclinations toward a particular style, and their feelings of security (Can they feel comfortable releasing control?).

Forces in the subordinates include such things as needs for independence, readiness to assume responsibility, and tolerance for ambiguity. The forces that Tannenbaum and Schmidt call "forces in the situation" include type of organization (Will participative decision-making be accepted and appropriate?), group effectiveness (Can employees work together?), the problem itself (Is it simple or complex, minor or important?), and time pressure.

Maturity Level of Followers

In contrast to Reddin and to Tannenbaum and Schmidt, who examined several components of the situation, Philip Gates, Kenneth Blanchard, and Paul Hersey looked at only one aspect of these components (subordinates) as being the most important and called this aspect "follower maturity." In the view of these authors, the leadership style a leader chooses ought to depend on the maturity of the followers. By maturity, they mean three things:

Figure 1. Effective and Ineffective Manifestations of the Four Possible Leadership Styles According to Reddin


Developer
Executive
Bureaucrat
Benevolent Autocrat
More effective
RELATED
INTEGRATED
SEPARATED
DEDICATED
RO
TO
Missionary
Compromiser
Deserter
Autocrat
Less effective

From *Managerial Effectiveness* by William Reddin. © 1970. Reprinted by permission of McGraw-Hill Book Company.

- a capacity to set high but attainable goals
- a willingness and ability to take responsibility
- education or experience

Because follower maturity can change over time, these authors believed that appropriate leader behavior should also change over time. When followers are low in maturity, they need leaders who are heavily task-oriented. As follower maturity increases, leaders can shift their emphasis from tasks to relationships. Then as followers come to have above average maturity, even their need for relationship behavior decreases.

A similar model of leadership style is proposed by Kenneth Blanchard, Drea Zigarmi, and Patricia Zigarmi, who say that "school principals should be guided primarily by a single key factor" in choosing their leadership style. This factor is the followers' "developmental level," which, they say, "is determined by the degree of competence and commitment that a follower employs to perform a particular task without supervision."

One teacher, for instance, may be highly enthusiastic about performing a certain task but lack necessary skills; in this case, the leader must clearly tell the teacher what to do and how, while clearly supervising the person's performance. Blanchard and his colleagues call this the *directing* style. In contrast, the *delegating* style (assigning decision-making responsibilities to the follower) is appropriate when the follower is both motivated and competent to do the task.

In a situation where the follower has some competence in the task but is not very motivated, the leader needs to combine direction with praise and encouragement to raise the individual's confidence. In this *coaching* style, say Blanchard and his coauthors, control over decisions stays with the leader. The final style, *supporting*, is for the follower who is competent but varies in commitment. "Theirs is more a motivational problem than a confidence problem," say the authors, so the leader actively listens and supports the follower as he or she makes decisions and carries out tasks.

Multiple Elements

Thomas Sergiovanni maintains that "maturity of followers (or any other single factor of which I am aware) is too simple a construct around which to build a contingency theory of leadership." In an article criticizing leader training programs that focus only on one situational variable, Sergiovanni cites a number of other contingencies on which leadership style has been found to rest. These include Reddin's job characteristics, Fiedler's leader influence, and such concepts from other authors as role expectations of followers, peers, and superordinates; personality characteristics of leaders and followers; time constraints in achieving objectives; political considerations; and interpersonal tension within the group.

In an earlier work, Sergiovanni and David Elliott cited the aspects of the situation they felt were most important for leaders to consider: the kinds of demands the job makes on leadership, the nature and distribution of power and authority, and the expectations held by significant others. Sergiovanni and Elliott noted that educational settings (particularly leadership situations in elementary schools) only occasionally call for separated and dedicated styles. According to these authors, therefore, styles that emphasize human relations will be the most effective in schools. They explain that with separated and dedicated styles "the human dimension is neglected." "The focus of leadership in general" ought to be related or integrated in schools that "wish to make a human difference."

Situation and Personality

If leadership effectiveness depends on the situation, does it follow that who the leader is has no importance? Stephen Hencley, in a survey of leadership theories, noted that to many authors "the situational approach maintains that leadership is determined not so much by the characters of the individuals as by the requirements of social situations." Hencley feels that the situational approach focuses on "relationships and variables in social and environmental situations that appear to generate leadership behavior." Individual capacity for leadership is not important.

But this view is certainly not held by all authors on leadership.

Fiedler saw propensity for task-oriented or relationship-oriented behavior as a function of personality and noted that the leader's personality was one factor in determining success. He described his theory of leadership effectiveness as one that "takes account of the leader's personality as well as the situational factors in the leadership situation."

Andrew Halpin, too, whose theories were examined earlier, saw leadership as being determined in part by the situation and in part by leader characteristics. E. Mark Hanson, in a review of leadership style theories, defined situational theory in general as the view that situational factors and personality variables interact in determining leader effectiveness.

Leader personality does make a difference in leadership style; in fact, many authors believe that leadership style is determined by personality and is difficult to change. This idea does not, however, negate the important contribution of situational theory and research that no leadership style is ideal for every leadership situation.

Can You Change Your Style?

If the situationists are right, if leadership style ought to vary to fit the situation, then it follows that leaders need to be able to change their styles at will. Is this possible? Is leadership style flexible enough to be changed to fit the situation? Or should leaders attempt to change the situation instead?

Identifying Your Style

The first step for a leader wanting to change his or her style is to become aware of what that style is. Yet identifying one's style is not simple. Fiedler, in a 1979 article, cites two studies that found that most leaders are not able to see their styles as others see them. In fact, one study found a zero correlation between leader and subordinate style ratings. Since it is assumed that others' perceptions are more objective than one's own, it seems likely that most leaders do not see themselves accurately.

All is not lost, however. Fiedler believes that leaders can be taught to recognize their styles. Together with Martin Chemers and Linda Mahar, Fiedler developed a teaching guide that helps leaders identify whether they are relationship-motivated or task-motivated. This guide asks leaders to look at their own behaviors and helps them rate themselves on a number of specific style factors, rather than asking them to make guesses about overall styles.

Much of Fiedler's own research used the Least-preferred Coworker scale as an instrument to measure style. Leaders are asked to describe the colleague whom they have most disliked. Those who describe this coworker in very negative terms have been found to be task-motivated, whereas those who describe him or her in positive or less critical terms have been found to be relationship-motivated.

Sergiovanni and Elliott also have formulated a questionnaire to help leaders identify their own styles. Those who take this questionnaire are asked to describe how they would act if they were leaders of a work group. Respondents mark "always," "frequently," "occasionally," "seldom," or "never" to such statements as "I would allow members complete freedom in their work," "I would needle members for greater effort," and "I would schedule the work to be done."

Sergiovanni and Elliott suggest that leaders might find it helpful to have their coworkers or subordinates describe the leaders on the same questionnaire. They warn, "Don't be surprised if others see you differently than you see yourself."

Thomas Bonoma and Dennis Slevin display their leadership model on a grid to help leaders diagnose their styles. This grid, reproduced in figure 2, rests on their belief that leadership style is a mixture of where information for decisions comes from and where decision authority is placed. Bonoma and Slevin quoted a reader who reported that this method "confirmed that my actual leadership style was inconsistent with my preconceived image of leadership style."

Style Flex

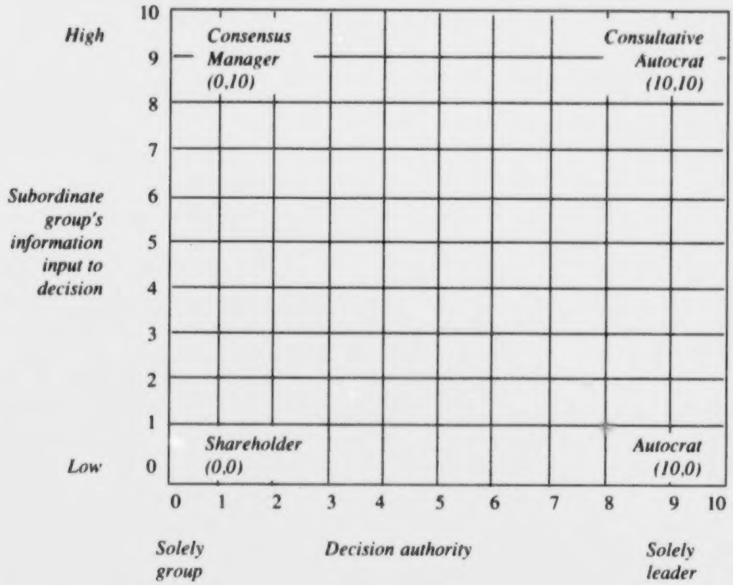
Even if style can be identified, it does not necessarily follow that it can be changed at will. We hear out, first, those researchers who deny style flexibility, then those who admit to some degree of flexibility, and, finally, those who insist styles must change.

Styles Are Difficult to Change

Certainly Fiedler's contingency theory admits for very little style flexibility in leaders. As mentioned earlier, Fiedler sees leaders as either task-motivated or relationship-motivated but not both. Fiedler saw this basic style motivation as part of one's personality and, as such, very difficult to change, especially through a short training program.

> At best it takes one, two, or three years of intensive psychotherapy to effect lasting changes in personality structure. It is difficult to see how we can change in more than a few cases an equally important set of core values in a few hours of lectures and role-playing or even in...one or two weeks.

Figure 2. Bonoma-Slevin Leadership Model Grid


High
Low
Subordinate group's information input to decision
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Consensus Manager (0,10)
Consultative Autocrat (10,10)
Shareholder (0,0)
Autocrat (10,0)
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Solely group
Decision authority
Solely leader

From *Executive Survival Manual, A Program for Managerial Effectiveness* by Thomas V. Bonoma and Dennis P. Slevin.
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Yet at the same time Fiedler maintains that neither style is appropriate for all situations. Are some leaders thus doomed to failure simply because they find themselves in a situation incompatible with their styles? The answer is no; Fiedler believed that those leaders in incompatible situations could change the situation.

Sergiovanni, too, resting his case heavily on Fiedler's findings, has maintained that style, like personality, is very difficult to change. Although he admits that "some leaders are able to change styles with ease," he believes that "trainers overestimate style flexibility and do not account sufficiently for those of us (perhaps the majority of us) with more limited style ranges."

Also holding to this view are the researchers who identified the "change facilitator styles" of school principals—initiators, managers, and responders. Hall and his colleagues say "the available research and training experiences lead us to believe that one's style is so closely tied to personality and history that it is not easily changed." Principals may be able to change their individual behaviors for a time, but their overall style continues.

Some Leaders Can Change Their Styles

"Successful leaders can adapt their leader behavior to meet the needs of the group," insist Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard, who see four possible combinations of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior:

- task-oriented behavior
- relationship-oriented behavior
- task-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior combined
- neither task-oriented nor relationship-oriented

Like Reddin, Hersey and Blanchard believe that any of the four styles could be effective. But Hersey and Blanchard do not believe that every leader used or even could use all four styles. "Some leaders are able to modify their behavior to fit any of the four basic styles, while others can utilize two or three styles." In other words some leaders have the ability to be flexible in style and others are more rigid; the most flexible are the most likely to be effective in jobs that require a lot of adaptability.

Reddin is another author who believes that some leaders can change style and other leaders have little flexibility. According to Reddin, the best leaders have three important abilities. The first is "situational sensitivity," which enables leaders to diagnose situations. The second is "style flexibility," which allows them to match their styles to the situation, and the third is "situational management skill," which helps them to change the situation to fit their styles.

Styles Must Change

Probably the theory of leadership style that allows for the greatest style flexibility was developed by Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi. In their model, the leader must vary his or her style according to the followers' competence and confidence, which change not only from person to person but also with each task assigned to the same person. In assigning each task, the leader must choose among directing, coaching, delegating, and supporting styles.

Likewise, Gates, Blanchard, and Hersey held that leader behavior must vary to fit the "maturity" level of followers. As followers became more able to operate on their own, these researchers believed that leaders would be forced to change their styles. The successful leaders would change, whereas the unsuccessful could not.

Flexibility Is Not Always Desirable

Reddin saw another side to style flexibility. He saw the negative effects of a "high-flex" manager in a situation that calls for a lower degree of flexibility. This situation Reddin described as "style drift"; "drift managers" are those who are perceived as having no minds of their own, who fail to organize their situation, and who allow change to overwhelm them. Thus Reddin saw that the need for style flexibility, like the need for a particular style, varies to fit the situation.

School Leaders Must Be Flexible about Some Things

There are so many diverse components of a principal's job that the situation may change from minute to minute. If we analyze the situation in Fiedler's terms, we find that at times the "task structure" is clearly spelled out (such as in organizing a bus schedule), and at other times it is extremely vague (as when improving school climate). At times "position power" is high (such as when hiring a new teacher) and at times very low (as in implementing a request from the central office). Only "leader-member relations" may stay fairly stable, but these vary from school to school.

In the face of this complex situation and the conflicting theories reviewed here, one conclusion seems clear: school administrators are going to have to be flexible about something—either their styles or their situations—or they are not going to be able to cope with their jobs. It is up to each individual administrator to decide, based on the theories presented so far, which aspect can be most easily changed.

Synthesizing the Theories

The preceding sections have presented important aspects of some (but certainly not all) well-known leadership theories. At this point it may seem appropriate to ask how these theories fit together. Can they be coordinated to form a more all-encompassing theory?

It is quite tempting to think that we now have all the pieces of a giant puzzle that can be fitted together into a coherent whole. And at first glance it may appear that many of these theories are quite compatible. Certainly, all those that emphasize concern for task or human relations as elements of style have something in common, as do those that emphasize decision-making.

But after we have made these rather elementary connections, we are blocked from taking the logical next step of making generalities about all the theories. For instance, at first it seems to make sense that leadership styles that stress human relations are quite similar to those that stress participative decision-making, but the analogy does not hold up. A leader with democratic or subordinate-centered style may (or even must) also have a concern for task according to some of these theories (notably Halpin's).

Other seeming similarities turn out to be superficial. Although both Fiedler and Reddin see task and human relations as important components of style, they are diametrically opposed about whether leaders can change their styles—and this difference has big implications for the practice of leadership.

Unfortunately, it is not yet time for an overarching theory of leadership. The data are not all in on important questions like whether leaders can change styles or what the most important components of style should be.

The kind of synthesis that is possible with leadership style theories is one that compares and contrasts the theories in a way that shows graphically how they are alike and how they differ. This we have attempted to do in the form of table 1 on pages 44 and 45. In addition to listing the theories according to the components of style they emphasize, the table also gives each theory's answer to the questions of whether the components are mutually exclusive, whether style ought to vary with the situation, what the components of the situation are, and whether style is flexible.

So What?

None of the theories of leadership style discussed so far has much value to leaders unless it can be used to improve leader performance. Whether styles can or should vary to fit the situation or how one determines the important characteristics of the situation are questions that do not really matter unless the answers can be used to select or train better leaders or to be a better leader.

Researchers and theoreticians do not always share this pragmatic view. Their work is not always aimed at practitioners, and even when it is, they are more often concerned about discovering "truths" than they are about being helpful. Thus, the theories discussed in this chapter do not always easily or neatly lend themselves to practice. Nevertheless, the following section is an attempt to pick out those practical implications that can be taken from the theories and studies discussed so far.

Becoming a Better Leader

How one uses leadership style theories depends on two things: what beliefs and assumptions about leadership one holds and what one's goals are.

Table 1. Comparison of Leadership Style Theories

Dimensions	*Authors*	*How Many Styles?*	*What Kinds of Style?*
DECISION-MAKING	Tannenbaum and Schmidt	2	*Decision-Making* "Subordinate-centered vs. boss-centered" (Democratic vs. autocratic) (former most effective)
	Bonoma and Slevin	4	*Decision-Making* Four possible styles: autocrat, consultative manager, consultative autocrat, shareholder (all but the last are effective)
PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYERS	McGregor	2	*Views of Employees* Theory X (need extrinsic motivators) vs. Theory Y (self-motivated) (Latter view most effective)
TASK AND HUMAN RELATIONS	Halpin	2	*Task and Human Relations* Concern for initiating structure or consideration
	Fiedler	2	*Task and Human Relations* Task-oriented vs. Human relationship oriented (either can be effective)
	Reddin	4	*Task and Human Relations* Four combinations of human relations orientation and task orientation. Four possible styles: integrated, separated, related, dedicated (each can be effective)
	Gates, Blanchard, and Hersey Hersey and Blanchard	4	*Task and Human Relations* (both can be effective)
	Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi	4	*Task and Human Relations* Four combinations of directive and supportive behaviors: directing, coaching, supporting, delegating (each can be effective)
	Sergiovanni and Elliott	4	*Task and Human Relations* (same as Reddin above) Integrated, separated, related, dedicated (each can be effective)
INNOVATION AND RISK-TAKING	Hall and others, Hord and Hall	3	*Change Facilitator Styles* Initiator (most effective at implementing change), manager, responder
	Miskel		Several, including risk-taking propensity of leaders
	Holloway and Niazi		

Are Styles Mutually Exclusive?	*Do Styles Vary with Situations?*	*What are the Components of the Situation?*	*Is the Leader's Style Flexible?*
Yes (leader cannot use both at the same time)	Yes	Forces in the manager, forces in the subordinates, and forces in the situation	Yes (leader chooses the styleapprociate at the time)
No (all possible combinations of the styles are possible)	Yes	Where authority is placed and where information comes from	Yes
Yes	No	Not applicable	Not applicable
No (effective leaders have bothconcerns)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Yes	Yes	Most important component is leader situational control, made up of position power, leader-member relations, task structure	No
No	Yes	Organizational philosophy, technology, superior, coworkers, subordinates	Some leaders are flexible and some are not
Yes (although leader can change from one to the other, does not use both simulataneously)	Yes	Follower maturity	Yes (must change with time)
No	Yes	Follower developmental level—competence and commitment	Yes (leader varies style with each follower and each task)
No	Yes	Demands of the job, nature and distribution of power and authority, expectations held by significant others	Usually no, and not without great difficulty
No	No	Not applicable	No
Not applicable	Yes	Leader years of experience and innovative management techniques	Not applicable
Not applicable	Yes	Leader control	Not applicable

Below are listed some goals that leaders may have, each followed by a brief discussion of strategies for accomplishing the goal suggested by the pertinent theories. The leader will want to weigh each strategy according to his or her philosophy of leadership. The first and largest group of goals and strategies is based on the assumption that leaders can, indeed, change their leadership styles when it is necessary.

Goals That Assume Flexible Style

Raise Motivation of Workers, Help Them Accept Changes, and Improve Morale. If the leader holds these goals, then more "subordinate-centered" leadership, as defined by Tannenbaum and Schmidt, may be appropriate. Although Tannenbaum and Schmidt do not offer a recipe for how to become more subordinate-centered, they do offer guidelines for determining whether this style will be appropriate for particular subordinates. This leadership style may indeed be in order if the subordinates have the following characteristics:

- high needs for independence
- readiness to assume responsibility
- high tolerance for ambiguity
- interest in the problem at hand
- understanding of and identification with the goals of the organization
- necessary knowledge and experience
- a history of sharing in decision-making

Besides depending on subordinates, the decision to change to more subordinate-centered leadership must also consider other factors: the manager's feelings and values, and situational forces. Is subordinate-centered leadership valued by the manager? Does the manager have confidence in subordinates? Will more participative decision-making be accepted in the particular organization and are employees compatible enough to work together? All these questions must be answered before a switch to subordinate-centered leadership is clearly called for. An acceptance of McGregor's theories and a desire to increase employee motivation will probably also prompt a similar type of move toward more participative management.

Remove Stress, Reduce Workload, and Ensure the Survival of the Organization. If the leader is, however, in the position of some principals today who have for a long time been committed to participative management, who already ask employees to help with every decision—from which teacher to hire to which waste basket to buy—and who feel overwhelmed by the process, then a more assertive style of leadership may be appropriate. For participative managers who feel under great stress, overworked, and worried about the very survival of the organization, a return to more leader autonomy may be in order. This does not mean a return to Theory X, but rather a realization that leaders must make some independent decisions.

Determine If the Leader's Style Fits a Particular Situation. Some leaders may feel that leadership style ought to vary to fit the work situation but may not know how to determine whether their style is appropriate for their own particular work situation. Their goal thus becomes one of assessing the compatibility of their style and situation. Like Tannenbaum and Schmidt, Reddin does not specify how to change style, but his theory is very helpful in determining if there is a fit between style and situation.

The leader can first determine which one of Reddin's categories (dedicated, related, separated, or integrated) describes his or her style. The next step is to look at important components of the situation as outlined by Reddin (superior, subordinates, technology, organizational philosophy, and coworkers) and determine whether the style used is appropriate to fit these.

For instance, if the manager knows more about the job than do the subordinates, if unscheduled events are likely to occur, if directions must be given, or if performance is easily measurable, then an effective dedicated style (benevolent autocrat) will contribute to the manager's success. But if the leader in this situation is not "dedicated," he or she may have to make some changes in either the style or the situation.

Adapt Style to Maturity of Followers. Some leaders are going to find that their experience, beliefs, and abilities cause them to lean toward the theories that hold that style should change with follower maturity. These leaders will closely assess their follower's capacity to set goals, willingness to take responsibility, education, and experience and choose their styles accordingly.

According to Gates, Blanchard, and Hersey, the appropriate style is task-oriented when maturity is low, relationship-oriented when it is moderate, and as little leadership as possible if maturity is high. Leaders will remember, too, the warning that follower maturity may regress (especially when new tasks are presented) and that style must change to fit. In Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi's framework, leaders combine varying degrees of direction and support according to whether the followers have competence and confidence to carry out the task.

Improve Decision-Making. Some leaders have trouble making leadership decisions or even deciding how these decisions ought to be made. These leaders may find it helpful to borrow Bonoma and Slevin's idea of looking at information input and decision-making authority and determining for each decision who ought to supply information relevant to the decision and who actually ought to make the decision. Based on this assessment, the leader may decide to increase or decrease staff involvement in decision-making.

Those interested may also find it helpful to use Bonoma and Slevin's leadership checklist to help them think through how well their styles fit the organization's needs. This checklist asks things like "Am I developing my subordinates by letting them participate in decisions affecting them?" and "Does the organization management system work for me or do I work for it?"

We must add to all these suggestions Sergiovanni's warning that situations are extremely complex and that any system that looks at only one or two components of the situation is much too limited. Leaders who focus only on one situational component may run into trouble with the others. Worth repeating, too, is Sergiovanni's warning that for many leaders, styles may not be easy to change. Those who expect it to change overnight are in for a frustrating time.

The preceding suggestions have all been based on the supposition that leaders have some control over and can change their styles. The next group of suggestions is based on the opposite assumption: leaders' styles usually cannot be changed.

Goals That Assume Inflexible Style

Change the Situation to Fit One's Style. If one accepts Fred Fiedler's assumptions about the necessity of changing the situation when style and situation are incompatible, his theories are extremely useful in improving one's leadership abilities. In the book written with Martin Chemers and Linda Mahar, Fiedler has supplied specific techniques for making needed changes.

After explaining how to categorize both style and situation and providing instruments for use in the process, these authors advise leaders on how to change the situation to fit their style. Fiedler, as we recall, believes that relationship-oriented leaders work best in situations of moderate control, and task-oriented leaders work best in situations of very great or very little control. According to the authors, the most important step a leader can take to increase control is to improve leader-member relations. This might be done through socializing more with members of the group or requesting particular people to work in the group. The second most effective way to increase control is to change the task structure. This might be done by structuring the task more tightly or asking superiors for more structured tasks or detailed instructions. Obtaining more training often serves to make the task more structured. The final method of increasing control would be to change one's status or "position power." This might involve developing more expertise in the job or using more fully one's decision-making power.

Fiedler, Chemers, and Mahar also explain how to decrease control of the situation through such tactics as socializing less with the workers, loosening task structure, and asking for more participative decision-making. They also note that those who accept Fiedler's theories about the difficulty of changing style and yet who nevertheless feel that their styles must change may want to embark on a program (probably lengthy) of therapy.

Increase Innovativeness. Leaders who want to become more innovative will have to increase their risk-taking behavior or make their organization's management techniques more innovative. How can risk-taking be strengthened? According to the findings of Holloway and Niazi, one way is to increase control of the situation by improving leader status or group support.

Improve Human Relations. If school leaders accept Sergiovanni and

Elliott's theory that a style stressing human relations is effective in most schools, then they will want to assess their styles (using the Sergiovanni and Elliott questionnaire) in attempting to determine whether their styles do indeed have this kind of emphasis. Most people believe they have human relation skills, but without an instrument they are unable objectively to assess how they compare to others on this dimension. Those who discover that they have the required related or integrated styles will be reassured. Those who are very weak in human relations will face a difficult decision. They may have to reassess whether a school leadership position is the best place for them to be.

Training Programs

Any theory of leadership style that makes it possible to become a better leader also has implications for leadership training programs. If a theory can be used to improve leadership behavior, it can also be the basis for a training program. Anyone who wants to institute a training program for leaders can begin by going back over this chapter, extracting the theories that would be helpful along with the new behavior these theories imply, and using those as a basis for training leaders. Aside from these obvious applications, a few more specific applications need to be made.

Hersey and Blanchard, who preferred to view leadership as "an observed behavior" not dependent on inborn abilities or potential, believe individuals can be trained to adapt their leadership styles to fit varying situations. They argue that "most people can increase their effectiveness in leadership roles through education, training, and development." Nevertheless, these authors do not believe that leadership training is easy and they warn that most training programs fail to consider the difficulty of changing styles quickly.

Fiedler likewise is critical of leadership training programs, but for other reasons. Fiedler notes that most training programs are never evaluated objectively, so that it is impossible to tell whether they were really effective or not. Most programs that have been evaluated "throw considerable doubt on the efficacy of these training programs for increasing organizational and group performance." Fiedler's theories offer an explanation of why this finding may be so. Assuming that most leadership training programs teach leaders to be more relationship-oriented or more task-oriented, Fiedler notes that even if it were effective, each kind of training would be useful only to some leaders and not to others, depending on their situations. A leader trained to be more task-oriented will become better suited for situations where the leader has much or little control but will become less suited for situations involving intermediate amounts of control. Those trained to be more relationship-oriented would be better suited for situations intermediate in control but poorly suited for high- and low-control situations.

Fiedler offers an alternative. "If leadership training is to be successful, the present theory would argue that it should focus on providing the individual with methods for diagnosing the favorableness of the leadership situation and for adapting the leadership situations to the individual's style of leadership."

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The leadership training guide written by Fiedler, Chemers, and Mahar attempts to do exactly that. This guide, mentioned in the previous section, is designed as a self-instructional program to help leaders become more effective. Part 1 is concerned with identifying leadership style, part 2 provides tools for accurately diagnosing and classifying leadership situations, and part 3 discusses how to match the leadership style with the situation, and, if necessary, change the situation. The guide contains numerous exercises, each usually consisting of a short case study or incident presenting a problem in leadership and asking the participant to choose the best of several solutions. Average time for completion of the entire guide is five hours. In a 1979 article, Fiedler noted that objective evaluation techniques have proved this program to be extremely effective.

Another training program that shows evidence of being effective has been described by Leverne Barrett and Edgar Yoder. Unlike the programs criticized by Fiedler, this program was carefully evaluated with pre- and post-test data collection and (something unusual in most evaluation efforts) a control group.

The program was based on the theories of researchers like Halpin who make two assumptions not held by Fiedler: that effective leadership requires both task-oriented and human-relations-oriented behavior and that leadership style can be changed by a leadership training program.

Barrett and Yoder emphasize that an important component of the program was its first step: principals were given feedback about how their teachers saw them as leaders through the teachers' responses on the Supervisory Behavior Development Questionnaire, the Likert Profile, and the Job Objectives Questionnaire. Barrett and Yoder maintain that this information helped leaders realize the need to change and made them more responsive to training. The program sought to teach human relations skills through such workshop activities as communicating, instituting administrative structures that promote communication, and establishing a working climate in which teachers and students have feelings of self-worth. Task-oriented activities included showing the principals how to help teachers learn and achieve the goals of the school.

According to a posttraining survey of teachers, the administrators improved their leadership behavior in both task-oriented and human-relations-oriented areas, especially in adequacy of communication and work facilitation.

These successful examples should not obscure the fact that some training programs on leadership style have serious problems. Those who choose a program should remember the warnings of Sergiovanni, who objected not only to the simplistic nature of many programs (especially those that looked at only one situational variable) but to the very goals of the programs.

> The leadership models themselves are too simple, the claims of most leadership trainers are unrealistic and the assumptions basic to the models and to training programs are conceptually flawed on one hand and emphasize instrumental and mechanical aspects of leadership at the acute expense of the substansive on the other.

Administrators looking for a good program should be wary when promises of success are too sweeping, when instantaneous changes are promised, and when the true goals of leadership appear to be forgotten.

Leader Selection

Just as they have implications for leadership training programs, the leadership style theories discussed here all have implications for leader selection. Any theory that includes ideas about the most effective style can be adapted to choosing the most effective leader. Some of the theories and findings have specific application to leader selection in the schools. For example, Miskel's research with principals implies that propensity for risk taking may be one good indicator of the performance potential of principals. This finding seems especially noteworthy in light of the fact that quite often those who are considered the most promising candidates are conformists who follow all the rules and never task risks.

Conclusion

This brief survey of theories and research on leadership styles reveals the subject is not a simple one. The theories are complex and varied and encompass such things as personalities, attitudes, decision-making techniques, risk-taking, and orientation toward work and people. They include such areas as leaders' control of the situation, subordinates' maturity, and technology. Some rest firmly on the belief that leadership style can be changed, whereas others assume that it cannot. Some theorists maintain that an effective leader has a style that emphasizes a concern for both the "task" and "human relations," whereas others believe that these concerns are incompatible and not found within the same person. Some theorists stress an ideal leadership style, but others hold that the best style varies to fit the situation.

How can such diverse and conflicting theories be helpful to leaders? After the initial smoke and confusion have cleared and administrators are actually able to make sense of and differentiate among these theories, their usefulness begins to become apparent.

Because leadership by definition includes action, any theory of leadership is helpful only if it can be used to guide action. Each of these theories has implications for better leadership. Each can be used as a basis for training leaders, for selecting leaders, and most importantly for becoming a better leader.

Although the theories disagree significantly, basing one's actions on any one of them is more effective than following no theory at all. This is because action based on a coherent theory is more consistent than action that is purely blind. It tends to be more economical of effort and less wasteful of physical and psychic energy because it is based on a clearer logic and vision than is blind action.

So then the question becomes how to use these leadership style theories as a basis for one's leadership behavior. Although there is no magic recipe, some criteria and ways of evaluating the theories are better than others. The first step is to understand the major leadership style theories. The second step is to weigh the evidence, look at research findings, and examine the logic and internal consistency of each theory.

And what is the final step? It might seem that the final step is simply to choose a theory to follow. But of course it is not that easy. Leaders do not choose the theories they follow like dishes from a smorgasbord. Rather, choosing a theory is like buying a new pair of shoes—it has to fit the person who is going to use it.

So rather than intellectually determining the "best" theory, the final step is to look closely at yourself and your situation. Do you believe you can change your style or does that sound extremely difficult or impossible? Are you already aware that your style changes from situation to situation? What are the most important components of your situation? What is the most important aspect of your style, and what do you believe it ought to be? In short, which theory makes the most sense to you and fits best with your needs?

It may be that, in the face of so much conflicting evidence, the only way out of the leadership maze is to rely on intuition. In the end, it is simply the informed intuition of the leader that is the intended outcome of this analysis of leadership concepts and theories.

Chapter 3

Training and Selecting School Leaders

Mark E. Anderson

Amidst the growing body of research on effective schools and the current call for school reform, the principal has emerged as a key person in the effort to achieve excellence in schools. A principal's leadership is among the most crucial elements necessary for school success, and a successful school almost always boasts of having an outstanding principal. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the important task of training and selecting school principals.

During the 1990s, nearly 60 percent of all current principals in the United States will retire. This decade presents a "window of opportunity" for school districts to hire talented principals who can lead our nation's schools into the Twenty-First Century. As a recent publication on principal selection from the U.S. Department of Education suggests:

> We must take this opportunity to fill our schools with dynamic, committed leaders, for they provide the key to effective schools where we will either win or lose the battle for excellence in education.

Unfortunately, the means by which American principals are trained and selected are often ill-suited to the development and employment of outstanding leaders. School practitioners often voice concern about the preservice training of school principals and contend that university programs do not adequately prepare aspiring administrators for the complexity of the principalship. In addition, several studies and leading educators suggest that school districts may not invest sufficient time, energy, and money to identify, train, select, and induct new principals.

As troubling as this might sound, an encouraging sign—documented in the following pages—is that several districts are willing to make the necessary investments to groom and hire the most capable candidates. In addition, some universities are improving their principal preparation programs, working in cooperation with school districts to bridge the gap between the theoretical concepts of school administration taught in university classrooms and the practical aspects of the principal's role.

This chapter examines the training, recruitment, selection, and induction of principals. It summarizes research and leading educators' opinions on each of these topics and documents strategies that characterize successful programs of principal training, selection, and induction. Administrators, school board members, and aspiring principals who want to capitalize on the coming "window of opportunity" can use strategies presented in this chapter to assess the status of their principal preparation, recruitment, selection, and induction methods.

Training Principals

Are principals who are outstanding school leaders born, not made? As suggested in chapter 1, most modern researchers, stressing nurture over nature, believe that major competencies of leadership can be learned. Nevertheless, school administrators and trainers of administrators have grappled for some time with identifying effective methods to prepare individuals to be successful principals. Traditional avenues to the principalship, including teaching experience, course work at a university, a practicum, and even a tour of duty as a vice-principal, have not proved satisfactory. Practitioners complain the most, however, about their graduate training.

The Inadequacies of Principal Training

For many years principals have voiced dissatisfaction with the utility of university training in preparing them for the realities of principal life. A 1968 survey of principals found that fewer than 2 percent of elementary principals credited their success as school administrators to their graduate course work (Department of Elementary School Principals, National Education Association). Recent reports show that principals' sentiments toward their preservice training have not changed significantly. Summarizing the state of affairs in 1983 in a policy report, the Southern Regional Education Board (Lynn Cornett) stated that principals' overriding complaint about university training programs is that they are "too theoretical, and do not provide the necessary training to deal with the job."

What is the source of administrators' discontent with their graduate training, and why do not university programs adequately prepare aspiring administrators for the principalship? The central problem, many contend, is that most university programs present knowledge about school administration, but do not help students develop skills to translate that knowledge into practice. Richard Schmuck writes:

> Universities . . . have traditionally provided sound academic preparation while offering only minimal attention to transforming theory into practice. Moreover, the academic course work in personnel evaluation, law, business management, clinical supervision, and public relations, although competently presenting technique and technical knowledge, offers little opportunity to use that knowledge in coping with real people in real schools.

Edwin Bridges suggests that preparatory programs may even provide experiences that are dysfunctional for those who aspire to be leaders in formal organizations. By comparing the work of graduate students with the work of managers, Bridges provides a lucid analysis of why university programs may not prepare individuals to deal with the realities of leadership.

The Pace of Work

One problem with university training programs is that they do not prepare aspiring administrators to deal with the quick pace of principals' work. Drawing on Henry Mintzburg's classical study of managers, *Nature of Managerial Work*, Bridges writes, "Manager's work is characterized by brevity, variety, and fragmentation. The manager's workday is hectic, unpredictable, and riddled with fifty to one hundred different occasions for decisions." Managers are frequently interrupted and often face situations demanding quick decisions.

Academic training programs, on the other hand, require aspiring administrators to spend long hours alone, reading, writing, and contemplating potential solutions to problems. "In comparison with the work pace of managers," Bridges states, "the student's tempo is snail-like. There are few surprises and much time alone." As a result, "the fledgling leader is ill-prepared to handle the accelerated tempo of the managerial role."

Dealing with Conflict

A second major problem with university training is that it does not adequately prepare principal aspirants for dealing with conflict resolution. The way a manager reacts to conflict has a dramatic effect on his or her relationships with employees and on organizational productivity. Bridges notes that managers can use a variety of methods to resolve conflicts. They can engage in win-lose arguing (competition); withdraw or fail to take a position (avoidance); divide gains and seek concessions between parties in conflict (compromise); soothe the parties (accommodation); or confront disagreements and engage in problem solving to find solutions (collaboration).

Leading researchers of leadership and many educators now believe a collaborative style of conflict resolution is likely to foster more productive relationships and enhance the performance of an organization. Bridges suggests that graduate students, however, usually rely on avoidance to resolve conflicts with their classroom teachers. "Collaboration," he writes, "is one of the means least used for resolving conflict."

Communications

A third area of concern is the "character of work-related communications." Administrators typically depend on face-to-face communication to accomplish their work. "Approximately seventy percent of the manager's time involves face-to-face communication with others," Bridges writes. The graduate student, on the other hand, spends more time in reading and writing activities than in work-related personal interactions. Bridges concludes, "there are clearly major discrepancies in the modes of communication that are most relevant to the work of students and that of managers."

Emotions of Work

A final difference between university training and managers' work deals with the emotional content of the workplace. Feelings are usually irrelevant in graduate training programs, which stress the value of ideas and rationality. "Rarely is the student forced to cope with the emotions of others or to witness situations where people constructively and openly work through their emotional difficulties," Bridges writes. School administrators, however, deal with emotions constantly. Angry parents, excited students, and aroused staff members are commonplace in a principal's work environment. "Periods of emotional tranquility," Bridges notes, "are punctuated by episodes of emotional turbulence" in a manager's work day.

It is unlikely, Bridges concludes, that graduate training programs prepare aspiring administrators for the realities of managerial work. The placid emotional environment of the student may even result in the "trained incapacity" of future leaders. His analysis clearly points out areas that universities must address to transform their programs into relevant training experiences for aspiring principals.

Assessments such as Bridges', combined with complaints from practitioners and increased national attention on the importance of a principal's leadership, are stirring the demand for changes in the methods that universities and school districts use to train aspiring administrators. The next section examines recent calls for reform in principal preparation, followed by promising strategies and practices that may improve the preparation of school leaders.

Calls for Reform

During the last decade, effective schools research has focused national attention on the importance of a principal's leadership. Virtually all reviews of research on effective schools point to the critical role that a principal plays in school success. Although correlational studies that have tried to link principal leadership behaviors with student achievement have yielded no significant relationships, it is clear that effective schools research has contributed to the current practice of zeroing in on the principal as the key agent for achieving educational excellence.

As a result of this new-found attention, the preservice training of principals has come under increased fire from scholars, national commissions, and, again, principals themselves. Collectively, these criticisms are aimed at colleges of education and school districts for not providing the field-based experiences necessary for developing outstanding principals.

Kathleen McCormick, citing the 1986 National Governors Association report *Time for Results*, says the certification of principals is currently not based on results, but on educational requirements. "Too often, a candidate's ability to provide instructional leadership does not have to be demonstrated and is not even considered." The National Governors Association report recommends that public schools become more actively involved in the preparation of principals by making clinical experiences a key element in training, certifying, and hiring principals.

One year later the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), in *Leaders for America's Schools*, expanded on these same concerns. The UCEA report states that research reveals troubling aspects throughout the field of principal preparation, including lack of collaboration between school districts and universities and lack of preparation programs relevant to the job demands of school administrators. Universities, school districts, and professional organizations should cooperate more fully in the preparation of school principals, the report argues.

Educators have proposed and tried several promising strategies and practices that begin to meet the call for reform of principal preparation. Although these strategies are not perfect solutions to improving the training of principals, they are examples of what several institutions are doing to bridge the gap between the theoretical and technical concepts of school administration taught in the university classroom and the requirements of professional practice in the field.

Promising Training Strategies

To close the gap between classroom and practice, most preparation programs for principals now require some type of internship or practicum. A report by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), *Performance-Based Preparation of Principals: A Framework for Improvement*, states that field experiences at the conclusion of a student's course work are often the "sole mechanism of preservice preparation by which the gap is bridged." Although field-based experiences are needed, "such an approach," the report argues, "ignores or makes trivial the breadth of the gap to be spanned."

The NASSP report suggests that a variety of carefully designed bridging procedures must occur in the classroom prior to or in conjunction with field experience. These classroom bridging procedures should:

- emanate from appropriate theoretical constructs of the profession and other related disciplines
- provide application in relatively "safe" settings where students can make mistakes and learn from them
- encourage repetitive applications so that students can practice effective behaviors
- place students sufficiently close to the field setting so that the remainder of the transition can be made with a minimum of difficulty.

The following sections highlight three classroom bridging procedures: performance simulations, case studies, and games.

Performance Simulations

Performance simulations are one strategy that university trainers can use to begin bridging the gap between classroom and field. Simulations recreate real-life situations where the student must quickly plan and take actions to solve problems that school principals typically face. Simulations include inbasket exercises, group activities, stress exercises, and teacher observation simulations, to name a few.

Developed initially for industrial training, several empirical studies, reported by Bernard Bass, found that managers trained using simulations performed significantly better on supervisory assessments and were perceived by followers as better leaders than those given a traditional course on the principles of leadership. Borrowing the simulation idea from business, NASSP developed a number of simulations for its Assessment Center project. In validation studies of NASSP simulations, Neil Schmitt and his colleagues found high correlations between principals' performance on the simulations and their actual on-the-job behavior. Simulations' greatest drawback, according to NASSP, is that "too few excellent simulations are available, making repeated applications unfeasible."

Case Studies

A second classroom bridging procedure uses case studies rich in descriptions and contextual details of real-life school situations to help aspiring principals develop analytical, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. According to Vivian Clark, "case studies capture [the] brevity, variety, and fragmentation in the principalship and demonstrate the attempts by various principals to meet these demands of the job."

Clark recommends that trainers of principals use case studies for class discussions, for examination of the basis for principal decisions and their effectiveness, and for self-analysis of how the student might handle the situation. Although "case studies do not provide panaceas for training principals, . . . they can be a very useful training tool and should not be overlooked," she concludes.

Games

Organizational, institutional, and business games, a third bridging strategy, are living cases where trainees make sequential decisions and then live with them. During games participants experience success and failure more fully than in other types of simulations. Wilderness labs are an example of a training game that has achieved widespread recognition and use from corporations such as AT&T, Xerox, General Electric, and Marriott.

Although wilderness labs have not been used much in education, a new principal training program at the University of Oregon uses this training activity as part of its principal preparation program. According to Richard Schmuck, the program's director, the focus of Oregon's wilderness lab is on leadership development and team building. The lab takes place on a "Ropes Course" owned and operated by a 4-H organization near Salem, Oregon.

"Aspiring principals take on a series of structured mental and physical challenges designed as metaphors for professional challenges in a school," says Schmuck.

> Success depends not on physical strength or athletic skill, but on a team's ability to solve problems creatively, allocate diverse resources effectively, maintain commitment of team members, and develop support networks. After each challenge, the participants as individuals and the teams reflect on the process: What contributed to team effectiveness? What fueled or took away energy and commitment of individuals? How might we apply what we're learning to the school? By the end of the weekend, insights from the woods are translated into action plans for the school.

According to the NASSP report, university training programs do not use performance simulations, case studies, games, or other classroom bridging procedures very extensively.

> Most programs use them only in minimal ways. No program, perhaps, uses them to an optimum degree. Some of this neglect is attributable to the small number and variety of bridging procedures. A greater proportion of the problem may be due to lack of recognition that performance-based learning is important for sufficient transfer of theory to practice.

NASSP recommends a massive professional effort to develop more and better classroom bridging procedures, to disseminate them, and to incorporate them into preparation programs.

Field-Based Experiences

In addition to classroom bridging procedures, various field-based experiences are also being recommended for the preservice training of principals. This section features three types of field-based experiences: course-based field activities, practica, and internships.

Course-Based Field Activities

It is helpful for aspiring administrators to explore various aspects of the principal's role directly in the field. In course-based field activities, trainers require students to complete assignments such as conducting field interviews and observations that add a practical dimension to the academic content of courses. Some course-based assignments include

- observing a school board meeting, negotiations sessions, student discipline hearing, or faculty meeting
- interviewing administrators on a specific topic such as developing a building budget, bringing about a change in a program, or designing a staff inservice plan

- observing and then conducting a teacher observation and postconference
- interviewing a school board member or political leader on issues central to education

The best field activities are those that enable students to see how theoretical or technical aspects of school administration can be put into practice. In addition, trainers in effective programs instruct students on various observation and interview recording techniques prior to their field-based assignments. Finally, they assist students in carefully analyzing information collected in the field. Without critical analysis and reflection, the activities are primarily passive in nature and may not help students develop useful insights.

Practica

Practica are another field-based activity that can help aspiring administrators begin to make the transition from theory to practice. A practicum is usually a significant project, at least one semester in duration, in which students demonstrate administrative skills. In exemplary training programs, the student is accountable for planning, implementing, and evaluating one or more projects.

Practica should occur not only near the end of students' university training sequence, but throughout their preparation. With this approach, universities and school districts can use the practicum as part of a career guidance plan that helps those interested in administration to "test the water" before deciding to pursue administration as a career. Unfortunately, the current practice in most universities is to schedule practica experiences near the end of preservice education, after students have already invested so much time and money in their training that a brief exposure to reality in the field is unlikely to change their minds about wanting to be administrators.

A second criteria for a successful practicum experience is that university faculty members and school district administrators work together in closely supervising and providing helpful feedback to students on their projects. According to the NASSP, university supervisors, school district administrators, and even fellow students need to carefully analyze and constructively criticize students' practicum projects. "The ability of the student to receive and utilize relevant criticism," the report argues, should be "one of the criteria applied in assessing practicum outcomes."

A final criteria for an exemplary practicum experience is a requirement that students bring about a change, minor or major, in some aspect of a school's structures, norms, or traditional procedures, as they work directly with people involved in the school. Thus, relevant practicum assignments will probably require some release time from an aspirant's regular duties. University faculty and school administrators should also provide students with information and ideas on successful change strategies and carefully guide aspiring administrators through a change process.

Internships

If carefully designed and supervised, internships come nearest to helping aspiring principals realize fully the sweep and complexity of an actual principal position. The idea of internships, which give prospective principals a chance to try their hands at real-life school administration, is not new; full-time internships are, however, still the exception rather than the rule. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching favored extensive internship experiences for principal hopefuls in its 1983 study, *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America*. Carnegie's president, former U.S. Commissioner of Education Ernest L. Boyer, recommends a one-year administrative internship in which the candidate works closely, on a full-time basis, with an experienced and successful principal.

In his 1983 landmark study *A Place Called School*, John Goodlad also called for lengthy internship experiences. "It is simply not established procedure in the educational system to identify and groom cadres of the most promising prospects for top positions, as is the case with IBM, for example." Goodlad believes school districts must be willing to make an investment designed to pay off in the future, scheduling candidates for paid, two-year study programs carefully planned to balance academic study and one or more internships as assistant principals.

Internships will not produce outstanding leaders unless they are carefully designed, supervised, and scheduled over a sufficient period. Schmuck lists several reasons most internships have not been effective:

> (1) the preparation does not occur over sufficient time; (2) the preparers—the university professors and field supervisors—do not collaborate closely enough; (3) efforts are not deliberately planned to establish trainees' cognitive linkages between theory and practice; (4) insufficient attention is given to both personal-emotional development of the trainees and the social support they receive throughout the internship; and (5) although interns have received supervision from experienced administrators, they have not in the main received mentoring, that is, close and supportive help in an egalitarian and collegial relationship.

On the basis of his study of beginning principals, John Daresh believes that districts' failure to grant release time for aspiring administrators may be a significant roadblock for effective training experiences. He states that most internships and practicum experiences usually consist of

> synthetic situations where aspiring principals, in most cases full-time teachers unable to get district support and approval for release time, find some quasi-administrative tasks that can be performed during the time that is not assigned during the school day to teaching or other duties. As a result, people are being prepared to serve as instructional leaders by spending five to ten hours per week supervising bus loadings, calling the homes of truant students, filling out forms for the central office or the state department of education,

> or devising new student handbooks. These activities are, no doubt, useful for the smooth operation of a school, and many practicing administrators are engaged in these activities every day. However, to rely on projects such as these to give anyone a clear picture of the multifaceted nature of most principals' jobs is truly ludicrous.

Daresh also suggests that the assumption behind such training—competence comes from practical experience—may be false. "Simply assuming that one learns by doing practical things is an incorrect assumption," he writes. Daresh contends that aspiring administrators need to spend a great deal of time reflecting on and analyzing the skills they learn in the field and the activities in which they are engaged. "Practice without reflection," he notes, "is not of great value to learning anything." Thus, Daresh recommends that trainers carefully guide students through a reflective learning cycle to improve students' administrative abilities and insights. "This guidance takes time and requires a true concern for the learner as an individual." Unfortunately, "preparation of administrative candidates in many universities is not a very personalized process."

Several university-school partnerships are underway that begin to address the shortcomings of past internships. For example, Bibb County Public School System in Georgia developed an exemplary internship program in cooperation with the University of Georgia. According to Thomas Hagler and others, aspiring administrators spend an entire year in a full-time internship in the program. In addition to working full-time under the helpful supervision of experienced administrators, the interns observe other principals in the district; attend monthly seminars conducted by the superintendent and his staff; meet twice a month with the university coordinator; and attend bimonthly seminars with other interns to share frustrations and triumphs, pose problems and offer solutions, reflect on their activities, measure their own perceptions and experiences against those of their peers, and develop support networks.

Interns at Bibb County also take a five-credit-hour university course each quarter on topics such as Introduction to Supervision, Administration of the School Curriculum, and Public School Business Administration that link course work to intern activities. University faculty members and school district administrators also work together in carefully designing and closely supervising each intern's program.

School Systems Invest in Training

Although our focus so far has been mainly on university training programs, probably the most crucial ingredient in preparing capable school leaders is individual school districts. Without the financial and emotional support of senior school administrators and school boards, the prospects for "growing a healthy crop" of new principals who can effectively lead our nation's schools during the upcoming decades is highly unlikely.

Exemplary training programs will certainly cost money. According to

Catherine Baltzell and Robert Dentler, "The extent to which the school system invests in the preparation of principals is an index to other aspects of system quality." Baltzell and Dentler found that many districts are not willing to make such an investment and, consequently, do not have a qualified pool of potential candidates from which to choose when an opening occurs.

Baltzell and Dentler cite some districts that do provide the necessary training for prospective principals. For example, Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland began its leadership transformation efforts twenty years ago. In its Administrative Training Program, potential principals apply for and take a ten-week afterwork course on leadership. Graduates may then opt for a second eighteen-week, three-credit course in administrative leadership, which includes skill development.

After candidates complete this two-part sequence, senior administrators review all performance and related educational records of applicants and rank them from one to four. Highest scoring candidates who are still interested in the principalship are then invited to "Administrative Competence Seminars," where their interpersonal skills, communication and conceptual skills, and group leadership skills are formally assessed by a panel of senior administrators. Candidates are given points for their performance on each of the activities in the competence seminars, and are again ranked.

Top-ranked individuals are then placed in internships as full-time assistant principals for one year. Under the guidance of successful administrators, interns obtain experience in such areas as instructional leadership, staff and pupil personnel management, community involvement, and professional growth. At monthly seminars held with interns and their supervisory team, interns present an analysis of their log of daily activities and share a selected activity for group analysis and discussion. Each intern also completes a needs assessment on his or her strengths and weaknesses that is used to form a specific training plan designed to extend the intern's knowledge and skill in such areas as leadership, management, and supervision.

Training programs like the one in Montgomery County Schools are highly desirable but still very rare, according to the U.S. Department of Education report on principal selection.

The dismal prospects of inadequate district training programs for school principals are not without hope. Baltzell and Dentler found other districts beginning to meet the challenge of training future school leaders. My own research in Oregon identified districts making the necessary investments of time and money to groom capable principals. It is hoped that more districts will begin to realize that the training of capable leaders must begin long before they are needed.

Effective training programs are, of course, only the first step in hiring capable principals; recruitment, selection, and induction are other essential components in a comprehensive system that trains, obtains, and retains the most capable school leaders.

Recruiting Principals

Recruiting capable candidates into principal positions may be the most important task that school superintendents and school boards face in the next few years. With predictions that more than half of current principals will retire during the next decade, districts have a golden opportunity to hire many outstanding newcomers. As a senior personnel administrator in a suburban Northwest school district says, sophisticated recruitment and selection processes are now a necessity. "We are in a very competitive business, and we must make sure, through our process, we don't miss the best candidates."

Unfortunately, many districts haphazardly recruit principals, often missing the most capable candidates. Goodlad (in an interview by Sally Zakariya) said that the recruiting and hiring of principals is "to say the least casual. Most new principals are plucked out of the classroom in June and plunged into the job soon after."

Robert Dentler likewise believes the principal recruitment and selection process is "ridden with chance" and often does not conform to sound policy. As he told Zakariya,

> In most places, principal recruitment and selection still operates on the buddy system. Without changes in the integrity and vitality of the selection process, the ablest educational leaders may never turn their faces towards the principalship.

The recruitment of outstanding principals is too important to be left to chance. Patronage, favoritism, or familiarity should not be allowed to edge out merit. Goodlad, Dentler, and many other observers recommend that school districts begin grooming future principals long before they are needed to develop a pool of qualified candidates from which to select the brightest and best.

A Limited Pool of Capable Candidates

Although the pool of principal candidates is large—many individuals hold appropriate certification— there is reason to believe the number of "highly capable" applicants may be dwindling. Through interviews with school leaders for *The Executive Educator*, Kathleen McCormick was able to document a growing concern about a pending shortage of "rising stars" for the principalship. Scott Thompson, executive director of the 42,000-member NASSP, told McCormick, "We don't have enough top-notch people to fill the jobs."

Superintendent Frank Cleary of Binghamton, New York, told McCormick, "I don't see as many people coming up through the system who have the burning desire to climb the administrative ladder." One reason, Cleary explained, is that teaching itself is becoming a more attractive career: salaries are improving and teachers are being given greater control over and responsibility for what happens in the classroom. "Teachers spend more time looking at the pros and cons of administration," he says. Because of the high cost of moving and complications resulting from two-career families, he added, "the list of cons outweigh the pros, unless you can stay in the same district."

As discouraging as all this might sound, education leaders do agree the next few years will open up vast opportunities for talented and dedicated newcomers, including women and minorities. Effie Jones, associate executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, told McCormick, "There are plenty of talented women and minorities who are now certified to take administrative positions." Scott Thompson agrees "there are more strong women candidates than ever before." In the end, says McCormick, the exodus of experienced principals "might be just the window of opportunity that women and ethnic minorities have been waiting for. That is, if today's school leaders take the initiative to help train them."

Ways to Expand the Applicant Pool

Several studies call for school districts to make a concerted effort to expand the pool of qualified principal applicants. Outside recruitment, indistrict training programs, career ladders, and internships are all ways for districts to exert such effort.

Outside Recruitment

According to Goodlad, "School districts would be well advised—and perhaps should be required—to select, for posts available, from a pool of qualified applicants extending far beyond district lines." This procedure does not nullify a district's investment in principal preparation, he adds. "With all districts similarly engaged in the process, interest from investments would be shared."

School districts too often limit their vacancy announcements to narrow geographic areas. The U.S. Department of Education's *Principal Selection Guide* criticizes this practice and recommends that

> announcements should be placed in large circulation newspapers in cities within a 500-mile radius of the vacancy. If the district is itself in a large city, the search committee might advertise the opening in similar cities. To avoid becoming too ingrown, search committees should advertise in principal and superintendent newsletters, in education journals, and in the publications or at the conferences of professional associations. There are many options, but the most important thing is to avoid a narrow search that ends too soon.

Outside recruitment does not consist of simply advertising vacancies beyond local boundaries, but also focuses on finding and targeting individuals in other districts who are perceived as highly desirable candidates. According to Baltzell and Dentler, "If all goes well, the outsider is ultimately brought in. However, it is usually an outsider with a firm inside connection to the network." Districts with limited pools of applicants rarely recruit in such a manner.

School districts would also be well advised to work closely with other districts, state administration associations, women educational administration associations, and various groups of minority educators to encourage and recruit applicants from all groups in the population. As one superintendent who has been particulary successful at recruiting capable women administrators says, "we are attempting to recruit our leadership from the whole population, not just half of it."

Career Ladders

Career ladders are another means by which to expand the pool of qualified applicants, but, again, this method is more the exception than the rule in many school systems. Career ladders can include positions for curriculum and staff development specialists, head teachers, department chairs, deans, and assistant principals.

Altough career ladders are a way to test applicants' leadership abilities, many times districts do not provide individuals with the diversified experiences in these positions that are necessary for grooming outstanding principals. This is especially true of the assistant principal position, as James Lindsay notes:

> Too few assistant principals are groomed for higher positions; they receive narrow, theoretical training, and the on-the-job experience they have is just as narrow. Usually, an assistant principal is treated as a single-facet administrator—prepared, for instance, to be only a disciplinarian or only a director of activities. As a result, most assistant principals learn only a few of the many job skills they need to be good principals.

Lindsay believes in providing assistant principals with experience in all facets of building administration to improve a district's pool of trained and tested principal candidates. Principals themselves, Lindsay notes, play an important role in this training process:

> As a principal, you owe it to your assistants to help them develop into well-rounded, qualified professionals who are prepared to move into new, challenging positions. There's no magic to the process. All it requires is dedication and the willingness to make school administration a superior form of continuing education.

Internships and Training Programs

As noted earlier, internships and district training programs are other means to attract, train, and expand the applicant pool. To be effective, teachers must perceive these training opportunities as accessible, open, valuable, and professional. According to Baltzell and Dentler, candidates in the exemplary districts have a much greater sense of passing through a sequence of ever-narrowing gates as they are "weeded out" through credible training programs and internships.

A Northwest district's recruitment and training program provides a practical example of what school districts can do to improve the pool of principal candidates from which to recruit the most capable leaders. In January 1987, the David Douglas School District in Portland, Oregon (1987-88 enrollment approximately 6,000 students in 11 schools) launched its STAR (Selecting and Training Administrative Recruits) program for identifying, recruiting, and training prospective principals from within the district's teacher corps.

Of STAR's three phases, the first involves a series of ten weekly afterwork classes about educational administration, specific to David Douglas. Each class covers different aspects of administration, taught by a team of David Douglas administrators. Training focuses on the practical realities of what principals do, including both the frustrations and the joys. Topics are grouped according to four roles of the administrator:

> *A member of the administrative team.* An opening session includes presentations by the superintendent and principals from the elementary, middle, and high school levels on the administrative team structure in the district and each member's responsibilities.
>
> *Educational program coordinator.* Directors of programs such as special education, instructional materials, music, and PE outline their respective roles and relationship with district principals.
>
> *Instructional leader.* Principals and the curriculum director focus on components of an instructional leader such as research, classroom strategies, staff development, evaluation of programs, and skills in dealing with people.
>
> *A building manager.* Supervisors from business, transportation, food service, and data processing discuss their interaction with school principals and the principal's extensive involvement in these various areas of district operations.

Other sessions in phase 1 include the role of the administrator as disciplinarian, personnel manager, community relations specialist, financial wizard, and first-year rookie. All sessions include opportunities for class participation by means of questions and answers, brainstorming sessions, and small group work.

Phase 2 of STAR includes a week-long practicum experience, based on a plan that each participant designs in phase 1. During this phase, mentor relationships are established between participants and administrators. Interested candidates also attend an assessment center for evaluation and training.

In the final phase, the district establishes formal internships with building principals for interested and successful candidates. In addition, the district offers a series of workshops in the second year of the program that further explore topics in educational leadership.

Although STAR is designed to provide David Douglas teachers with information about becoming a principal in their own district, participants take the class for several reasons. Some are in the process of getting their administrative credentials and want to get the David Douglas perspective on what they have learned. Others are undecided about wanting to go into administration and take the classes to help them decide. The STAR program provides participants the needed insights into school administration to help them make that decision. The program also sends an important message to employees that the district values their competence and is interested in supporting their investigation of and preparation for school administration.

Pattern for Effective Recruitment

In sum, aggressive school districts do not leave the identification and recruitment of outstanding principals to chance.

Long before specific vacancies arise, they identify a pool of potential leaders and develop a "pipeline" to the principalship. District training programs, internships, and the assignment of teachers to various leadership roles are all ways to groom a cadre of capable candidates. Better yet, a training and internship program that welcomes women and minority candidates can offset any built-in disadvantages for these groups.

Aggressive districts not only train their own people for future principalships, but also aggressively recruit outside the district. Advertising widely in college job placement bulletins and professional organizations' newsletters is one outside recruitment means. Targeting talented individuals in other districts and helping them establish an entry to the district's network is another recruitment strategy. Districts increase their odds of finding the best candidates when they welcome a large number of applicants.

Selecting Principals

At the core of hiring the most capable principals is the selection process. As we will see, several studies suggest that many school districts may not select the best candidates. There are two possible explanations for this deficiency: (1) districts' vacancy announcements and selection criteria are nonspecific, and (2) districts use inadequate screening and selection techniques. This section suggests ways to strengthen vacancy announcements, selection criteria, screening and assessment methods, and interview procedures.

Vacancy Announcements

Principal selection begins with the declaration of a vacancy. Far too often, districts, especially large ones, do not specify in the vacancy announcement the particular school where there is an opening. Rather, the announcements call for applications for the principalship in general. Although most districts hire principals to serve in various schools during their tenure, there are good reasons to specify the particular school where a vacancy occurs. Districts are more likely to attract appropriate candidates when they list information concerning the special needs and characteristics of a school in the vacancy announcement. In addition, selectors can assess and match candidates' skills and leadership styles with the particular needs of a school in order to select the right person for the job.

Laura Fliegner argues that districts should provide the following types of information in vacancy announcements:

- needs to be accomplished by whoever fills the position
- important characteristics of the existing staff
- student's family background, cultures, extracurricular concerns, and feelings about school
- information about other executives in the school system

Unfortunately, too many changes in assignments may be necessary in larger school systems, requiring them to develop more comprehensive, general standards. Baltzell and Dentler warn that "when the resulting set of standards becomes too general, the generalities detract from the vacancy pool and from screening efforts."

Selection Criteria

The best districts take the necessary time and care to clearly define and articulate what they are looking for in a principal and how they will determine if a candidate meets selection criteria. Developing clear criteria increases a district's likelihood of hiring a top-notch principal. Exemplary districts, therefore, decide in advance what kinds of evidence they will gather to use in appraising candidates. Lorri Manasse argues that

> School districts need to make more explicit their criteria for selecting principals. If they are to move toward an instructional component in their definition of principal effectiveness, they need to clearly articulate selection and evaluation criteria that reflect that definition.

Baltzell and Dentler agree:

> Even when a district clearly aligns a vacancy with a specific school, many districts do not spell out criteria pertinent to educational leadership such as experience with program planning, budgeting, staff development and evaluation, plant management, or community relations.

The following criteria, spelled out as part of one school district's principal vacancy announcement, provide an example of the kind of specificity needed. Each district, however, must individually develop criteria that reflect the qualifications they seek.

Required Qualifications

- A record of exemplary teaching experiences
- Outstanding performance as a school improvement leader

- A record of successful community relations
- Demonstrated leadership in clinical supervision

Preferred Qualifications

- Instructional Theory Into Practice (ITIP) training and supervisory experiences
- Staff development experiences
- Knowledge of effective schools research
- Leadership experience as a principal or administrator
- Completion of NASSP Assessment Center simulations

Personal Traits

- A sensitivity to people
- A rapport with students
- The ability to inspire colleagues and students
- The ability to write and speak articulately
- A sense of humor
- The ability to encourage and use the information and opinions of diverse groups in decision-making
- Strong organizational skills

Many districts defer the definition of such criteria until a candidate pool has been formed and review begun, say Baltzell and Dentler. "This lack of criterial specificity opens the way for widespread reliance on localistic notions of fit or image." For example, many districts in their study had a deeply held image of a "good" principal or a "top" candidate or "just what they were looking for." But instead of hiring a candidate for his or her skills or merit, these districts relied more on how a candidate would fit into the district and maintain the existing system. The hiring officials were swayed by their perceptions of a candidate's physical presence, projections of a certain self-confidence and assertiveness, and embodiment of community values and district's methods of operation.

Baltzell and Dentler found that districts employing exemplary selection practices give priority to "merit" over "fit." In the exemplary districts, selection teams looked for principals who could institute effective change and who would not just maintain the status quo. Based on their desire to hire effective change agents, these districts also used a well-defined set of criteria to systematically sort and rank candidates before selecting finalists for interviews. Without such clear sets of criteria by which to screen and select candidates, the probability of districts hiring the most capable principal is certainly diminished.

Screening

Screening typically involves two steps, which increase in importance. First, the personnel office normally screens resumes and applications to determine the candidates who meet minimal certification and experience standards. Next, there is a more formalized paper screening of eligible candidates who pass the initial screening. It is here where many districts begin to falter.

Fliegner believes school districts need to create comprehensive job descriptions and selection criteria, calling for feedback from representatives of staff members, students, community members, and administrators. Next, she says, "A district must develop a screening scheme and standardized ranking system by which screeners can systematically judge each applicant's file against their predetermined standards."

Exemplary districts have screeners conduct blind ratings of each candidate, in which screeners assign a numerical score to each candidate's lengthy application and reference documentation. Assuming districts effectively handle these important preliminary steps, the issue of who screens is another problem.

Who Screens?

In his treatise on *Victims of Groupthink*, social psychologist S. L. (Irving) Janis uses the term "groupthink"

> to refer to a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivations to realistically appraise alternative courses of action

Finding signs of "groupthink" in the districts they studied, Baltzell and Dentler note that the tendency often occurs in districts where a small, close-knit group of senior administrators do all the screening. Over time, they lose their ability to correct each other's errors and judgment. The researchers say that

> without some other participation (parents, teachers, principals, or students) screening loses its external credibility. It appears to take place in a way no one can attest to as trustworthy or well executed, except by the same team members.

An assistant superintendent of personnel in a medium-size suburban district said the inclusion of building principals and teachers on the screening and interview committee allows the district to "get various perspectives on all dimensions of what a principal candidate should be." This participation also makes the process fair and precludes "a 'good-old-boy' network where a favorite of the central office administration is preselected," he said.

Involving teachers, principals, parents, and even students on screening committees is one way a district can combat the "groupthink" syndrome. Exemplary school systems place a heavy reliance on the participation of school-based as well as district-level administration and staff for screening and selecting principals.

Assessment Centers

A promising option for screening potential principal candidates is the assessment center. Using an idea borrowed from the business world, the

NASSP began the first assessment center in 1975. It is one of the most flourishing approaches in education to identify and screen prospective candidates.

Having candidates experience a variety of simulations, the assessment center helps districts pinpoint potential principals' specific strengths and weaknesses in a dozen job-related areas: problem analysis, judgment, organizational ability, decisiveness, leadership, sensitivity, stress tolerance, oral communication, written communication, range of interests, personal motivation and educational values. According to Zakariya, "The result is a 12-dimensional profile of each candidate, which can be used as a prescription for professional development as well as a screening device."

Unfortunately, the cost of assessment centers deters many districts from participating. As Dentler told Zakariya, "They are fairly expensive and cumbersome to put into place. People are looking for shortcuts, and there just aren't any." No shortcuts might, in fact, may be a fitting epitaph for the old-fashioned wink-and-nod school of picking principals. "When you spend time and effort on selecting good principals," says Dentler, "you get both short-term and long-term payoffs—not just good leaders, but good system operations."

Written Assessments

Districts that use exemplary selection strategies also require some type of written communication as part of the screening or selection process. Writing assignments can help screeners begin to assess a candidate's philosophies and written communication skills. In one district I investigated, candidates are asked to respond to a series of pertinent questions, devoting a half-page essay to each question. Some examples of these questions are as follows:

1. What are some key descriptors of leadership and management? Give some examples of how you personally have used these elements to advantage.
2. Entrenched faculties and organizations can often be resistant to change. What processes will you employ in moving a school organization toward your envisioned change?
3. As a principal new to our district you choose to introduce yourself to the staff by providing working definitions of *teaching* and *learning*. How do you introduce yourself.
4. Recently the local paper editorialized that only after parents got involved in the schools has education improved. How will you direct into productive channels the energies of an active school community?

Having the applicants provide several short written essays "gives us a good idea of how candidates express themselves in writing: how they think," a senior administrator told me. In addition, "we have a strong feeling about the use of language as a mark of an educated person. Candidates have told us that our written exercise forced them to focus their philosophy into a succinct statement and quickly get to the crux of key issues."

The Interview

The interview is the most widely used selection technique and the technique most influential in hiring decisions. Yet the interview, if used incorrectly or used as the sole basis for hire, is neither valid nor reliable. According to Mary Cihak Jensen:

> Typically, the interview is unstructured, lasts less than one hour, and is highly influenced by first impressions, appearance, nonverbal behavior, and conversational skills.

Some studies suggest that interviewers may arrive at their decision to hire or reject an applicant within the first five minutes of the interview. The remainder of the interview can become a seeking of supportive evidence for the predetermined choice. According to E.C. Webster, "that early decision can be biased by what business calls the 'old school tie syndrome', the tendency of interviewers to prefer applicants similar to themselves."

Districts using sophisticated selection techniques choose principals who tend not to fit the stereotype of the tall, white, male principal pushing middle age. Instead, in exemplary systems, Dentler told his interviewer, "we found more women, blacks, hispanics and Asian-Americans. And more short people." In other words, selection in these districts is not based on looks, personality, fit, or first impressions, but instead on merit. How do you determine a candidate's merit? The much maligned interview process is not without promise.

Selecting Interviewers

Districts can improve the interview process by recognizing that not all people are equally adept at interviewing candidates. Jensen lists five qualifications for teacher interviewers that are applicable to principal selectors as well. Districts should select interviewers who have these qualifications:

- alertness to cues
- ability to make fine distinctions, perceive accurately
- ability to make immediate and accurate records
- willingness to use criteria established by the organization
- ability to suppress biases

Determining the individuals to involve in the interview is an important decision districts must make. Several studies advise using parents, teachers, and principals on the interview team to acquire different perspectives, to create a sense of ownership in the process, and to gain support for the candidate who is finally selected. In exemplary districts, superintendents are heavily involved in establishing the principal selection process, but often wait to interview until the interview committee identifies two or three top candidates. According to the Baltzell and Dentler study, superintendents in exemplary districts

> delay involvement until the final moment in order to avoid any ap-

pearance of undue influence. If the perception gets out that it's a Good Old Person process, it's all over—you may as well get another superintendent.

Training the Interview Team

Involving a broad base of people in the screening and selection may complicate the process unless district personnel train those individuals in legal guidelines and multiple assessment techniques. A personnel director with whom I spoke said he conducts a four-hour training session with the screening and interview committee. Incorporated into this session are discussions of various laws that govern the selection process, such as "protected classes" of candidatos, interviewing techniques, appropriate and inappropriate questions, and formulation of interview questions and procedures by the committee. Without such training, interviewers' choices may be unduly influenced by factors such as attitude congruence, first impressions, and personal biases.

Structuring the Interview

The reliability of the interview process is strengthened when the interview is structured: when candidates are asked the same, exact, predetermined, and well-thought-out questions. In addition, effective interviews include simulations, written exercises, and situational questions. This is in contrast to the practice of many districts, which conduct interviews in a causal manner, allowing candidates to actually control the flow of the interview.

A key element in exemplary districts' interview processes is the use of a set of situational questions that require candidates to formulate and provide answers to real-life school problems, such as the following:

1. As a principal, you face a student who has been sent to the office for making an obscene gesture to a teacher. The student reports that the teacher has on more than one occasion called him a "jerk" in front of the class. What are the issues and what will you do?
2. The district has a practice that athletic teams playing in a State championship late night game may come to school two hours late the following morning. The District also requires band and rally to attend the game. You are approached by members of the Rally squad and band who want the same consideration as that given the team because they are required to be in attendance. How will you respond?
3. You're the only administrator in the building. A parent bursts into your office and in loud, derisive language complains that a teacher has dealt unfairly with his student. The parent has a long list of complaints but focuses primarily on a recent classroom confrontation. The student has a history of being a troublemaker. How will you deal with the parent?

Performance simulations are another useful part of the interview process. Simulations require that applicants demonstrate certain skills for interviewers. In one district that incorporates simulation exercises in the interview process, candidates individually view a twenty-minute classroom lesson, designed specifically for the interview simulation by a staff development teacher. The candidate then prepares an observation report and holds a conference with the staff development teacher who taught the lesson. A committee member observes this conference. Finally, the staff development teacher rates each candidate on his or her conferencing and observation skills. Written simulations on situational or inbasket problems are another exercise that districts can use.

Other Sources of Information

Most important, the interview team should consider information gathered in the interview along with information gathered from other sources: applications, transcripts, teaching and administrative performance, references, and assessment center data. If the finalists are not from within the system, districts should also conduct site visits in finalists' schools and communities to verify if the candidates are as good as they appear. If districts rely solely upon a thirty-to-sixty-minute interview to hire a principal, chances are high they will miss the best candidate.

In sum, exemplary districts use a comprehensive system to screen and select capable principals. They adopt written selection policies, develop specific selection criteria, identify the specific opening in vacancy announcements, involve and train a broad base of people in screening and selection, use multiple means of assessment, and consider varied sources of information about candidates.

Finding the most capable principals doesn't end with selection. Although the search for a principal ends when he or she is hired, the process is far from over. Selecting good leaders is only half the battle; the other half is helping them succeed and grow in the job. Well-organized postselection activities including orientations, professional development, opportunities for networking, and on-the-job assistance from experienced administrators are more likely to help newly hired principals succeed. The next section looks at the important task of inducting beginning principals into their position.

Inducting Principals

Induction programs for first-year teachers are becoming more commonplace in school systems throughout the country. Professional literature on teaching clearly establishes the crucial importance of the induction year in the career development of teachers. As a result, many states now mandate induction activities, such as mentor-teacher programs, for first-year teachers.

Even a cursory review of the literature on principals reveals that school districts are doing much less for the entry-year of principals. Although the issue of principal preservice training has received increased attention from policy makers and educators recently, John Daresh notes it is surprising that relatively few studies of the needs of beginning principals "have been carried out during the past few years."

The studies that have been made reveal that beginning principals experience a great amount of frustration, anxiety, and a sense of being inadequately prepared for what they actually encounter once in the job. Because a principal's leadership is so vital for creating educational excellence, it is clear that school districts must begin addressing the needs of beginning principals so they can quickly begin leading, as opposed to just surviving.

This section addresses (1) how principals are inducted and the problems they encounter that might inhibit their effectiveness, (2) promising programs that might enhance beginning principals' effectiveness, and (3) the school district's role in assisting beginning principals.

Experiences of Beginning Principals

"This job isn't at all what I expected it would be like." Such statements, or unspoken thoughts, are common to many individuals new to a job. Everett Hughes has likened the plight of newcomers to a form of "reality shock," where individuals experience "surprises" that arise from differences between their "anticipatory socialization" (what they thought or were told the job would be like) and their actual experiences in the new setting.

From reports of principals about their first year on the job, the "shock of entry" is common among rookie administrators. When left on their own, many experience problems that may handicap their ability to provide the kind of leadership needed for school excellence. With this in mind, what are the surprises, frustrations, and problems that principals new to a school system face and how can school districts provide assistance for these fledgling administrators to help ensure their success once selected as the school's leader?

Isolation

For many beginning principals, the extreme isolation of the principalship comes as a shock. In addition to some brief orientations, many districts simply give newly hired principals the keys to the building and, in effect, say "sink or swim, you're on your own." Isolated and without guidance, newcomers often make mistakes that may have consequences weeks or months later.

Robert Nelson, in a study of beginning administrators in Northwest districts, found a common sense of isolation among newcomers. Although some administrators had previously worked in collaborative environments, there was "little opportunity to collaborate in their new position." Others, while not having come from a collaborative environment, told Nelson they "looked to administration as providing the autonomy to seek out collaborative opportunities with other administrators." Unfortunately, they also found little opportunity for working with other colleagues.

Daresh documented similar feelings of isolation and lack of collegial support among principals he studied in the Midwest. He recommends that districts develop strategies to reduce newcomers' isolation. "Ways need to be found to ensure that, whenever possible, new administrators are not left totally alone to solve problems in isolation from their colleagues." The isolation of principals contributes to many other problems that newcomers experience.

Technical Problems

Learning the technical aspects of the job is a second major problem that many new principals face. Beginning administrators report a wide variety of concerns in the technical or procedural area. Learning the logistics of many mundane, yet important, school system-specific procedures takes up a lot of beginning principals' time. For example, new principals must grapple with such concerns as how to read computer printouts provided by the district business office; how to set up for assemblies and lunch; how to address various legal issues; and how to operate the bells, clocks, and firebells.

After completing a study of beginning principals in the Midwest, Daresh wrote, "If any one single area of beginning administrator concerns could be classified as most powerful, this area of perceived lack of technical expertise related to how to follow established procedures was it." Because they receive little assistance from hiring officials or colleagues, many newcomers spend a lot of their time learning technical procedures that have little to do with leadership, but that are essential for the smooth operation of a school.

Socialization to the School System

A third major area of concern for new principals is "how to get things done" in the school system—socialization into the system. Beginning administrators in Nelson's study reported they were usually able to learn quickly the "logistics"; however, what was far more difficult to learn "were the strategies which the organization regarded as appropriate to the roles they assumed and the social relations in the organization."

Beginning principals in Daresh's study experienced similar socialization problems. For example, one principal told Daresh he felt rather foolish after following the procedures outlined in the school board policy manual regarding requests for new equipment for his building. Stated policy required that a formal application by the principal be filed with the assistant superintendent in charge of administrative services. After not getting any action on the piece of requested equipment that he felt he deserved, he found out that the "real" way things like that happened in his school system was for the principal to deal directly with the director of buildings and grounds and not bother the assistant superintendent who, after all, was too busy dealing with other matters that were not listed as his responsibility in the policy manual. Daresh notes:

> The new principal discovered this discrepancy between stated policy and real procedure only after talking to another, more experienced

> principal who noted that the request for equipment would probably only gather dust 'in somebody's in-basket' and would never be acted upon if 'normal channels' were followed.

"Learning the ropes," both the political and the social, of a particular district can be difficult for newly hired principals. Many important pieces of information about school system operations are unwritten and rookies must depend on others for "getting into the know."

New principals use different strategies, such as observing experienced principals, to obtain needed insight into the unwritten rules of the road. Unfortunately, beginners are often unable to observe veterans because they are physically isolated from other administrators or they do not believe they are good role models.

Communication with other principals is another strategy beginners can use to obtain needed information, but Nelson found that districts in his study did not facilitate needed interactions among administrators. Left on their own and not wanting to appear incompetent in the eyes of more experienced colleagues, some newcomers sought advice from individuals outside the school system. Nelson found that these discussions "did not present the organization-specific information that the newcomers sought."

Lack of Feedback

A fourth area of concern among beginning principals is lack of feedback on how they are doing. Performance evaluations by superiors can provide feedback and guidance to newly hired principals. Unfortunately, many beginners report such performance feedback is infrequent and, when done, not specific or helpful. Nelson found that most beginning administrators he interviewed "wished that they received more specific feedback from their superiors about their job performance. But formal feedback was rarely given."

Daresh reports similar concerns among beginning principals with whom he spoke.

> They never knew if they were really doing what was considered to be a good job, and no one in their schools or districts appeared inclined to provide much feedback or direction to help them understand how they were doing. This lack of feedback was an issue that principals felt from every level of the organization—superiors, peers, and subordinates.

Lack of feedback may contribute to new principals being tentative, indecisive, and anxious. It is clear that beginning principal performance may certainly be improved with specific feedback, encouragement, and guidance from successful and experienced administrators in or outside of a school system.

Given these problems of isolation, lack of technical guidance and socialization to the school system, and inadequate feedback, what training activities might help new principals to lead their schools? Some promising programs do exist.

Promising Induction Programs

As many principals report, preservice training never fully prepares them for the realities of principal life and most of their learning about the principalship occurs on the job. Learning how to be effective while on the job, especially without help or guidance, can be painful and ridden with chance. In an analysis of principals' work, Kent Peterson suggests several factors that may hinder on-the-job learning by principals:

1. Principals' preference for action in solving problems works against reflective self-assessment and learning.
2. Infrequent formal opportunities to share experiences with colleagues inhibit peer learning and prevent principals from capitalizing on a store-house of experience.
3. Professional growth and measurement of progress are hindered by feedback from superiors that is non-specific and abstract.

According to Stanley Schainker and LaRaine Roberts, "What emerges from practice and research is paradoxical: principals' most valuable source of learning is their on-the-job experience, yet the reality of that experience is seriously limited as a vehicle for learning." Clearly beginning principals need a structured and systematic process for learning how to effectively deal with various school-specific problems while on the job. Educators are beginning to recognize that school districts cannot afford to leave beginning principals alone to solve complex school problems, isolated from helpful colleagues. Thus, several institutions have begun the development of promising programs that can assist beginning principals.

Peer-Assisted Leadership

In fall 1983, the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development began Peer-Assisted Leadership (PAL), a unique professional development activity that enables school principals to analyze their own leadership behavior and that of a peer partner in a nonprescriptive and nonjudgmental manner. During a year-long process, principals learn and apply various skills for collecting data about their partners and sharing that information with them in a useful way.

In describing the program, Bruce Barnett states that the PAL training consists of a series of six full-day meetings at intervals of about six weeks with trainers from the Instructional Management Program of the Far West Lab. During these meetings, participants learn various skills for gathering and analyzing information: shadowing techniques to observe their peer partner, reflective interviewing, advanced reflective interviewing and theme building, clustering data by themes, final model production, and model presentations. Between meetings, Barnett reports, principals apply the skills in carrying out observations and interviews that provide data about their partners' schools. By the last meeting, principals are prepared to present models of their partners' instructional management activities to the group as a whole.

As a result of the PAL process, participating principals indicate that they benefit from working with other principals and that they practice more self-reflection, a process found useful in helping them run their schools. Principals also report that they receive many new and helpful ideas from their partners about how to handle particular problems that they encounter. Since PAL's inception, several districts have involved principals in the program. When I interviewed Ginny Lee, PAL trainer, she said the San Diego School District has used the peer-assisted leadership program as part of its induction program for beginning principals. In San Diego, senior administrators are paired with rookies, and the partners implement PAL techniques in assisting each other on school-specific leadership concerns.

Lee reports that Far West Lab has developed a training-of-trainers component to the program to increase the number of administrators who can participate. Bruce Barnett and Faye Mueller, in a study of the long-term effects of the PAL training on principals, found that collegial observation and reflective feedback have lasting, positive effects on participating principals. Structured opportunities for greater collegial support, such as PAL, can help address many of the problems, frustrations, and concerns of beginning principals, namely isolation and lack of feedback.

Principals Inservice Program

A program that has a similar emphasis on collegial support is the Principals Inservice Program developed in 1979 by the Institute for Development of Educational Activities (/I/D/E/A/). James LaPlant, director of the project, suggests that most

> inservice education for principals can be characterized as a smorgasbord of opportunities splattered on the schoolhouse wall in a way which leaves principals trying to decide if the wall is part of a large mural, a piece of abstract art, or perhaps an unwanted act of vandalism.

To counter the typical methodology of exposing principals to a "bag of tricks" in a one-shot inservice session, /I/D/E/A/ developed their program to assist principals in establishing "long-term" collegial support groups to provide school-specific improvement. These groups, each headed by an /I/D/E/A/-trained facilitator, are usually composed of six-to-ten principals who meet monthly over a two-year period.

The goal of the program is to help principals improve their professional competence in leading school programs that will help children learn. To that end, principals meet as a group to openly explore problems in their schools that demand solutions. LaPlant states, "In a climate of openness, trust, and mutual assistance, principals become resources for ideas and peer reviews in their professional development and school improvement efforts." Outcomes of the program are as follows:

> *Personal Professional Development.* The principal, as a member of

> a collegial support group, designs, implements, and evaluates a personal professional development plan to increase his or her leadership capability.
>
> *School Improvement.* The principal, as a member of a collegial support group, designs, implements, and evaluates a school improvement project to address an identified need within the school.
>
> *Collegial Support Group.* Members of the collegial support group provide assistance and encouragement to one another as they engage in their professional development and school improvement efforts.
>
> *Continuous Improvement.* The principal accepts responsibility for the achievement of personal professional development and school improvement goals.

In a study of participants in the /I/D/E/A/ program, Daresh (1982) concluded that collegial support is a sound practice with tremendous potential for improving the quality of inservice support available for local school principals:

> Particularly for beginning principals, the collegial support group concept allows administrators to work cooperatively to propose solutions for numerous daily problems and, even more important, to escape from the need to devote all their time and energy to daily managerial issues and tasks. Thus, principals are free to exercise a more creative approach to problem solving and may, over time, engage in the often illusive role of instructional leaders of their schools.

The /I/D/E/A/ program has become very popular among principals. According to Karen Fearing, administrative assistant at /I/D/E/A/, the Principals Inservice Program has expanded since its inception in 1978 to include 300 facilitators leading collegial support groups involving more than 3,000 principals from 28 states and 3 foreign countries. Collegial programs like PAL and Principals Inservice Program are just the type of support beginning principals need. Individual school districts, however, are the key. Districts must take the initiative to provide beginning principals with a variety of helpful induction activities.

The School District's Role

As mentioned in the section on training, universities and school districts can use a variety of bridging strategies to provide aspiring principals with practical administrative experience and knowledge to help them succeed in the principalship prior to their first position. Preservice training should not, however, be the only assistance that principals receive. In fact, it is naive to believe that preservice training or even out-of-district inservice programs will provide aspiring administrators with everything they need to know about how to be an effective leader in a particular school district. School districts, therefore, must continue training principals and provide newly hired administrators with a variety of supportive induction activities to help them continue their professional growth as school leaders.

Orient Beginning Principals

Districts would be well advised to provide newly hired principals with a well-thought-out and comprehensive orientation program. Simply handing a new principal the keys and expecting him or her to learn district-specific procedures by trial and error should not be the norm. Scheduled orientations with the business office, transportation, maintenance, public relations, personnel, and other important school system offices should all be included as part of a comprehensive orientation program.

Personnel responsible for each area should provide newcomers with specific procedural details that will help them learn the technical procedures and expectations of the district. Simply handing new hirees vague job descriptions, district policy handbooks, curriculum guides, and collective bargaining agreements is an ineffective orientation strategy. Without the unwritten histories and rationale behind such policies and requirements, beginning principals will not know what to do, what is most and least important, what procedures are open to change or challenge, and why certain procedures are necessary.

In small school districts, orientation responsibility may fall upon the superintendent. In larger systems, orientations can be carried out by a well-coordinated team of senior administrators. Although central office administrators should play an important role in orienting beginning principals, experienced principals are probably the most valuable resource for orienting new hirees.

Institute a Buddy System

Many educators interested in the improvement of practice for beginning principals suggest that districts should pair veteran principals with rookies in a sort of "buddy system" to help newcomers learn the "informal ropes" of a district. A buddy system can help reduce the isolation that many beginning principals experience, and it lets successful veteran principals give newcomers a needed understanding of the norms of a district. As Daresh notes, "people in any organization are often judged according to their ability to read and interpret correctly what are often very subtle signs and signals." The intervention of a trusted colleague who helps the beginning principal to understand unspoken expectations may help "ensure newcomers greater success."

A buddy or mentor principal system should be instituted with caution, however. Unless they are carefully chosen and trained, mentor principals may squelch fresh innovations and new ideas that beginning principals bring to the school system. Untrained mentors may simply pass on ineffective practices to new principals, perpetuating traditional processes and norms that may need to change. Effective mentors, therefore, must not tell beginning principals what they should do, but instead guide newcomers so that they are able to make their own decisions, based on a thorough understanding of the potential consequences of their choices. As Daresh suggests, "Mentors who would try to make inexperienced principals behave as they would are probably not mentors at all."

Finding effective mentors may be difficult, especially for small districts. Smaller school systems may need to reach out to other districts for help in securing effective mentors. Educational service districts and professional associations may also need to facilitate cooperative mentor-mentee programs for districts not large enough to foster their own.

Structure Beginners' Workload

Beginning principals need a great deal of time in their buildings to develop productive working relationships with staff, students, and parents and to assess various aspects of their schools' programs and operations. Hence, senior administrators must protect beginners from activities that require them to divert energy away from learning about their school. For example, districts should not immerse newly hired principals in a variety of district projects and committees. Such a practice only adds to the complexities of learning the system. Veteran principals often complain about being pulled out of their buildings to attend meetings called by the district office; for newcomers, such a practice can be even more detrimental.

Give Beginning Principals Feedback

Districts should develop a system whereby beginning principals are provided with specific and constructive feedback on their performance. Principals' supervisors can provide this type of feedback, but it requires a great deal of time observing rookies and working with them. Because superiors may be judgmental in their assessments and are often extensively involved in other district responsibilities, many educators recommend a collegial supervisory model, such as Peer-Assisted Leadership and Principals Inservice Program, to provide principals with feedback.

Develop a Plan for Professional Growth

If beginning principals are to continue to develop leadership skills and grow professionally, districts must assess newcomers' general leadership strengths and weaknesses as well as their skills and knowledge regarding district-specific priorities. Such assessments can be as formal as the NASSP assessment center simulations or can be tailored to fit each particular district's needs. Superiors, colleagues, and beginners should all be involved in assessing a newcomer's needs and then help the beginner develop a plan for growth that includes specific learning objectives, activities to help in the development process, an implementation time line, and an evaluation plan.

Facilitate Reflective Activities

Districts should encourage, or even require, that beginning principals and successful veterans observe each other to reduce newcomer isolation and to improve their work through a process of peer observation. Such an activity should not only include time to observe, but time for reflective analysis between participants.

Districts should also bring together beginning principals in reflective seminars to discuss their experiences and to offer suggestions for handling specific problems. Because most districts do not have a large enough number of beginning principals to create such peer interaction, cooperative arrangements between districts will probably be necessary. Again, state professional associations, educational service districts, and even universities can assist in coordinating seminars that bring beginning principals together for supportive and reflective discussions.

Conclusion

The principalship is probably the single most powerful force for improving school effectiveness and for achieving excellence in education. The familiar adage "so goes the principal, so goes the school" is on the mark in characterizing the importance of a principal's leadership. Although better preparation and selection of school leaders is not the complete remedy for educational problems, it offers an important beginning.

An effective preparation process based on a clear view of the principal's role, combined with better recruitment, selection, and induction techniques, can help usher in a new era of productivity in American schools. As the U.S. Department of Education's *Principal Selection Guide* states, the preparation, selection, orientation, and development of school leaders "is one of the most economical options for significantly improving schools."

School districts, therefore, cannot afford to leave the identification, preparation, and selection of outstanding principals to chance. Instead, school systems, in cooperation with universities, must be committed, both in policy and action backed with sufficient resources, to train cadres of aspirants to ensure an adequate pool of candidates. Then school systems must use sound selection methods to pick the best. Getting a "cracker-jack" principal does not, however, end with selection. School districts must also develop a comprehensive set of induction procedures for orienting and supporting new hirees. If they don't, even the best principals will never achieve their full potential and they may even wither on the vine.

Effective school reform does not and will not occur as a result of edicts from Washington or from state capitols, but instead educational improvement happens school by school, initiated and guided by capable school principals. Thus, developing, selecting, and supporting school leaders is a key for achieving the excellence in education that American school children need and deserve.

Chapter 4

Two Special Cases: Women and Blacks

David Coursen, Jo Ann Mazzarella, Lynn Jeffress, Margaret Hadderman

Educational leaders come in all ages, all shapes and sizes, and all temperaments. Studies of leadership have looked at many physical characteristics of leaders: height, weight, eye color, overall attractiveness. All these have been examined, and none has been found to significantly differentiate leaders from others. Significant differences are found, however, when one looks at two particular physical characteristics of educational leaders: sex and race.

Almost anyone who remembers "school days" has two images of school officials. The favorite teacher, in fact nearly every teacher, was probably a woman. But the feared and revered final authority, the principal, especially in high school, is likely to have been a man. When the memory then turns to the race of the principal, the pattern of the white, male school administrator begins to emerge.

Effective Leadership and Quality Education

Today, the problems of women and blacks in public school leadership may seem a little passè. Surely these problems are dwarfed by our worries and fears about such major issues as school violence or shrinking resources. Surely, the problems of women and minorities were solved long ago.

Yet such a judgment is not only superficial but inaccurate. The extent to which women and minorities participate in administering the schools is one measure of education's real commitment to the ideal of equal opportunity for all Americans, an ideal that is far from being realized.

It is easy to be lulled into the false assumption that women and minority representation in educational leadership now roughly reflects their representation in the general population. Yet, as this chapter will show, this is not the case; progress in this direction has been disappointingly slow. Still too often, ability seems not to be the most important factor in the hiring process.

If sexual or racial characteristics are more important than ability in determining who is hired for positions of leadership and responsibility in the schools, the caliber of public education will suffer. The issue then becomes quality education, and surely quality education is always important, is beyond political dispute, and is genuinely timely, never passè.

Staffing policies are as important to the educational process as is curriculum. The best policy decisions will come from administrations that include a variety of points of view. Women or members of minority groups have unique perspectives on certain problems, perspectives that can broaden and enrich the decision-making process at every level. In fact, a diverse staff may even help shape more desirable curricula. For example, women have a special sensitivity to sexism in study materials, just as nonwhites are more sensitive to racism.

Learning from Role Models

Schools educate children not only by what is taught in the classroom, but also by what is shown about how the world operates. For this reason, too, the identity of administrators is important in determining how schools socialize their students. When there is someone in authority who has characteristics in common with a child, that person may become a role model, a figure for the child to admire and emulate. Thus school officials can teach children appropriate behavior and help shape their aspirations and attitudes.

Children may come to feel that it is normal for the kinds of people they see running the schools to fill all executive positions. Black children who see only whites in authority may conclude that blacks are excluded from power, that it is futile for them to strive for decision-making positions. Similarly, girls who see women only as teachers, taking orders from male principals, may become convinced that this is natural and inevitable, that the most they can hope for in life are positions subordinate to men. By thus teaching some children not to strive for their highest human potentials, the schools are encouraging the waste of human resources. Surely this is a perverse and destructive form of "education."

The representation of minorities in positions of school leadership also has implications for stemming the dropout rate, which is highest among black and Hispanic students. If the schools are to retain members of all cultural and racial groups, they must have leadership that is representative of all these groups. All races and cultures must feel that their concerns are sincerely being addressed by those with power in the school. Otherwise the alienation that begins in a discriminatory school system may accompany these students into an adulthood in which they become a drain on an already badly depleted society.

To Leaders and Aspiring Leaders

It is important for today's educational leaders to become aware of the true situation regarding women and minorities in education.

Those in charge of hiring and promotion especially must understand the situation, how it got that way, and how it can be changed. Other leaders need to become aware of the special problems faced by their female and minority colleagues so that they can offer support to those who have achieved leadership positions and to those who aspire to such positions. Finally, women and minority leaders and those seeking to become leaders need to understand more about the situation that exists outside their own subjective experience. If the path seems blocked, they need to know that there is some hope. If the path seems easy, they need to know that others still face obstacles.

What about Other Racial Minorities?

In the literature on school administrators, "minority" is virtually synonymous with "black." This fact alone defines the status of Hispanics, Native Americans, and all other racial minority groups, who are denied even a token consideration.

This chapter reflects this situation, ignoring the status of all nonblack racial minorities in school administration, not because the subject does not demand attention, but because most writers tacitly assume, by their omissions, that it is simply not a big enough problem to consider. There is an urgent need for studies that will correct this imbalance and for more timely and comprehensive data collection efforts.

This chapter, then, is largely limited to discussing blacks and women. It is tempting to think that since both groups suffer from discrimination, being judged according to group roles rather than individual performances, they can be considered together. But discrimination is as complex and subtle as it is pervasive; what is true for blacks is not necessarily true for members of other racial minorities and may have nothing to do with women. For this reason, women and blacks are discussed separately.

The Woman Administrator

The successes of the women's movement seem to justify the commonsense notion that discrimination against women in school administration is not serious and is rapidly disappearing. In fact, such optimism is false. The central facts about women administrators are that there aren't many of them and that the majority of women in the schools are not employed in executive capacities.

An abundance of vacant administrative positions will not necessarily solve this problem. The expected retirement of half of all U.S. principals within the next decade *should* create new opportunities for both women and minorities. But, first, they will need to be trained and certified to serve in these positions, and, second, school districts must change their hiring and promotion practices, which traditionally have favored white males. Barbara N. Pavan, an associate professor of educational administration at Temple University, told Blake Rodman (*Education Week*, June 10, 1987) that women are increasingly well prepared, are obtaining the necessary certification, and are applying for the positions; they often "end up being among the last two or three candidates, but don't get the job." The chief culprits are discrimination and sex-role stereotyping.

Where Is She?

The relative scarcity of women executives in the education profession is well demonstrated by the data listed in table 1. According to the most recent survey, only 3.69 percent of superintendents are women. Effie Jones and Xenia Montenegro (1988) report that the current number of women superintendents is about 535 (out of a total of 14,500). This represents a 53 percent increase over the 350 women superintendents who were counted in a 1985 survey. Although such improvement is welcome, women are so far back of men that this rate of increase would have to recur every three-year period for nineteen years in order for women to reach parity with men.

Table 1. Representation of Women in Educational Administration

Survey Date	*Source*	*Superintendents*	*Assistant Superintendents*	*Principals*	*All Administrators*
1987-88	AASA data from Jones & Montenegro (1988)	3.69	22.5	23.94	29.64
1987	Feistritzer (1988)	4	—	24	—
1984-85	Jones & Montenegro (1985)	2.67	15.5	21	26
1982	Jones & Montenegro (1985)	1.8	9	16	25
1980	Jones & Montenegro (1985)	1.0	—	—	—
1980	McCarthy & Zent (1980)	—	8	—	25

All figures are percentages.

Women are better represented in the principalship, where about 24 percent of the current job holders are female. Although the data show that the representation of women in this position has improved during the decade, the rate of increase is slight compared to that of women superintendents.

When we extend the comparison to the more distant past, we see that women's representation in the principalship is still far less than it once was. In

1928, 55 percent of all school principals were women. In 1948, the percentage had dropped to 41, in 1958 it was 38, and by 1968 it was only 22.

This pattern extends to the prestige of the administrative jobs women get. In a 1978 survey, David Byrne and colleagues discovered that 75 percent of female principals worked in schools of 745 students or less, whereas only 37 percent of male principals were employed in these smaller schools; also, 14 percent of male principals were assigned to schools of 2,000 or more, but only 1 percent of female principals were found in these larger schools. Recent studies show that women principals are more likely to head elementary than secondary schools.

Until recently, another interesting discrepancy between men and women administrators has been their ages. In a 1971 report, Dorothy Johnson noted that women principals were older and more experienced than their male counterparts. Between 1958 and 1968 (a decade in which the number of women principals declined by 16 percent) the median age of women in that position rose from 52 to 56, she said, whereas that of men stayed fairly constant at around 44.

This age discrepancy may be lessening, however. In a recent Educational Research Service poll (see Rodman), women administrators' average age was about 47. In 1984 the average age for all principals was 46, says Kathleen McCormick, referring to ERS data.

In summary, these figures indicate that few women work as school administrators, that the jobs women get are the lowest ranking ones, that women who get the jobs have been, at least in the recent past, somewhat older than men working at comparable levels, and that the situation needs to improve much more rapidly than at present. There still seems to be an unwritten policy that women be assigned "women's work" instead of executive responsibilities.

A Woman's Place: The Power of Stereotypes

No single explanation can account for such widespread discrimination, but one important factor is the general acceptance of stereotypes about working women, in general, and women in administration, in particular. At the heart of all such stereotypes is the notion that a woman's place is in the home. This attitude persists despite the fact that women workers now constitute 44 percent of the U.S. labor force, compared to 29 percent in 1929. According to the 1987 *Economic Report of the President* (based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data), 55 percent of all married women work, including 50 percent of mothers with infants. Also, nearly 70 percent of single mothers work outside the home.

Sex role stereotypes may also help explain why the vast proportion of "professional" women workers are found in teaching and other semiprofessions such as nursing, social work, and librarianship. According to Mary Frank Fox and Sharlene Hesse-Biber, these female-dominated fields "have weakly developed theoretical bases of knowledge," "lack authority and autonomy," require less intensive training, and "tend to emphasize hierarchical ranks and differential duties." In contrast to established professions like law and medicine, "success in the semi-professions implies administrative rather than practicing roles." Yet in all these fields, women occupy the lower-level positions and men the administrative positions. Even in law and medicine, women are concentrated in relatively low-status specialties.

Stereotypes have certainly influenced women's socialization process. In this society, women have been socialized to accept subordinate roles and limit their aspirations. Sakre Edson mentions numerous mid-1970s studies of women teachers qualified to be administrators but choosing to remain in the classroom. She notes other studies focused on female educational administration students who become discouraged about career mobility and use their degrees to "pursue employment as consultants, researchers, or government service employees." Edson's own study of Oregon women pursuing principalship positions shatters "the stereotype of the non-aspiring women in administration." The women in Edson's study cited some common barriers to success:

> Traditional female barriers such as family responsibilities and lack of confidence rank low in the frequency with which they were cited. The two barriers most often reported were lack of experience and discrimination.

More recently, Stephanie Marshall's interview of ten women superintendents disclosed the same hurdles—role prejudice and lack of access to secondary line-experience.

Stereotypes, one can assume, are the result of conventional responses to conventional questions, overt or implied. According to Charol Shakeshaft (1981), "the majority of the studies on leadership styles and effectiveness have been done for the purposes of seeing if women 'measure up' to men." This sexist way of doing research, according to Shakeshaft, must be reversed. "New questions need to be asked." Instead of asking, "What keeps women out of a man's world?" one can ask, "What changes can be made in the male world to facilitate women?"

Stereotypes about men, too, help explain the problem. Sari Knopp Biklen refers to a position paper prepared by the National Conference on Women in Educational Policy that maintains that the popularity of the view of the school as a business makes women less likely to be chosen for administrative positions. Biklen states, "As schooling becomes more of a business, those in administrative positions turn to their image of effective business managers: business men."

Are Women Better Qualified?

Despite these persistent stereotypes, there is evidence that women possess both the required training and personality traits to become superior administrators. According to the *Digest of Education Statistics*, women's share of conferred doctorates in educational administration has steadily risen from 9 percent in 1970-71 to 42 percent in 1983-84. As Shakeshaft noted in 1987, the number of women currently in administrative training programs is nearly equal to the number of men.

Neal Gross and Anne Trask, in their landmark study of women in school management, found that the quality of pupil learning and the professional performance of teachers were higher, on the average, in schools administered by women. They also found that women exerted more influence over their teachers' professional activity than did men.

Virtually every evaluation of the comparative performances of women and men as principals has shown the complete inaccuracy of negative stereotypes of women administrators. In 1956, Vince Hines and Hilda Grobman reported on a survey in which women scored better than men in evaluations based on student morale, teacher morale, frequency with which teachers used desirable practices, and program development. Joan Meskin, after surveying all the studies, concludes:

> When we highlight some of the specific findings concerning women administrators in these studies—their propensity toward democratic leadership, thoroughness of approach to problem solving, and bent toward instructional leadership, as well as the general effectiveness of their performance as rated by both teachers and superiors—we puzzle over the small number of women administrators employed by school districts.

Two factors that may qualify women to be better principals than men are their longer teaching experience and their greater potential empathy with other women who still fill most teaching jobs.

While a few observers (for example, H. Lynn Erickson, Ruth Cimperman, and June Gabler) have argued persuasively that successful women administrators strive for androgynous or genderless leadership styles, other recent studies support Gross and Trask's gender-oriented findings. The superintendents in Stephanie Marshall's study viewed themselves as "social architects" rather than managers:

> They believed that their credibility was more dependent on their knowledge, expertise, communication skills, and authenticity. They saw their collaborative approach to leadership as being a result of both their socializing experience as women and as staff members rather than line positions they occupied prior to the superintendency. Without line authority, leadership was achieved through influence and expertise.

Another researcher, Joan Formisano, discovered that women principals tend to manage conflict by adopting an accommodating style that preserves interpersonal relationships. Shakeshaft (1987) goes one step further, suggesting that the traditional school structure "is itself antithetical to the ways women work best." Schools are unfortunately modeled after industry, with teaching separated from the administrative decision-making process.

"A female defined organizational structure probably would not have resulted in such overspecialization, in extreme forms of hierarchy or in administrators being mere managers," Shakeshaft says.

Roadblocks to Women's Success

What these findings about women's qualifications actually indicate is that a woman must be better qualified than a man if she hopes to become a successful school administrator. In view of the difficulties she will face, she *has* to be extraordinary. She is confronted with different expectations than a man faces, and her actions are judged by different standards. Betty Friedan and Anne Grant West cite an attitude survey that solicits a response to the following statement, which suggests some of these differences:

> They may act exactly the same way, but they are called: *absent-minded* if they are men, *scatter-brained* if they are women; *intellectually curious* if they are men, *nosey* if they are women; planners if they are men, *schemers* if they are women; *sensitive* is they are men, *emotional* if they are women; *logical* if they are men, *intuitive* if they are women.

According to Charlene Dale, women in administration are treated differently than equally qualified men in comparable positions. Superiors hold certain tacit assumptions about women that make it difficult for them to advance. For example, it is simply assumed that a young woman will not be able to accept a new job if it means relocating her family. In a comparable situation, it would be assumed that a man would be free to move.

This is one way in which women are faced with performance expectations that become self-fulfilling prophecies. Professionals tend to be either job-oriented, finding satisfaction in careers, or place-oriented, finding satisfaction in friendships and activities in a specific location. If a professional woman is not offered promotions, if her job seems to be leading nowhere, she may become place-oriented relatively early in her career. Once this has happened, if a promotion finally *is* offered, it would be undesirable if it meant relocating. The woman professional might then refuse to move, "demonstrating" her "lack" of both mobility and ambition.

The Obstacle of Negative Attitudes

Another important factor in job success is the attitude a male superior may have toward a new person working in his department. A supervisor naturally assumes that any man hired for a job is competent or he wouldn't have been hired at all. Even if he is unsuccessful, the results may be blamed, not on professional inadequacy, but on an "impossible situation." But if the same superior has misgivings about the ability of women, he will expect a new woman to fail and may even unconsciously look for signs of that failure. In addition, if his commitment to her success is minimal, he may deny her any significant support. In such circumstances, the woman's chances of at least a perceived failure are thus very great. Not surprisingly, this may eventually cause her to lose self-confidence, to become disoriented on the job, and, finally, to perform according to the expectations the superior has done so much, albeit unconsciously, to confirm.

The "perceived failure" dilemma is compounded by male administrators' lack of candor in their performance evaluations of female subordinates. As Shakeshaft puts it in a 1987 paper,

> When a male subordinate makes a mistake, his supervisor tends to level with him, "telling him like it is." When a female errs, she often isn't informed. Instead, the mistake is corrected by others.

In other words, males get the criticism they need and the chance to improve their behavior, whereas women may hear nothing but praise "even if their performance is less than ideal." With no corrective feedback to go on, women can overestimate their proficiency and be shocked at being fired, demoted, or overlooked for promotion.

Men's discomfort with women in authority influences the leadership styles adopted by female administrators. As Shakeshaft notes, many women have found "normal" methods of establishing authority completely ineffective:

> Some women report that they try to look less authoritarian, less in charge, and less threatening in an effort to be effective. Many comment that "the less I threaten the men I work with, the more I am able to accomplish."

Women who learn to "downplay their power, intellect and skill" actually receive higher ratings from men than "women who are seen as more competent." H. Lynn Erickson, in profiling successful women principals, suggests that an androgynous, soft but firm approach works best for resolving conflicts.

Many of the attitudes that keep women down are insidious, hard to identify. For example, Patricia Schmuck describes some of the ways a teacher can be gradually prepared for an administrative position. A supervisor may delegate various responsibilities to the teacher, with the tacit understanding that promotion will eventually result if the duties are handled well. A supervisor who believes that men make better administrators than women will not be anxious to offer such promotional opportunities to women. Consequently, more men will be in positions to be promoted, and those who are promoted will be, by virtue of their informal training, more likely to succeed immediately in their new jobs.

Women's conceptions of cooperation and interpersonal trust may be another insidious factor accounting for their largely token representation on administrative teams. Elliot Z. Garfinkel found that women superintendents valued competency over trust and conceptualized trust as reliance on other team members' integrity and capacity to speak and perform their jobs well. In contrast, the male superintendents assigned trust the highest team value and defined this concept as the ability to share one's thoughts and opinions with other team members without ridicule or "betrayal" to people outside the group. This definition, according to Garfinkel, is consistent with the stereotypical role conception of management as a "closed circle" of like-minded teammates willing to play by the rules. Women administrators are simply overlooked as less trustworthy or enthusiastic team players.

Lack of Networks and Mentors

There are other, even more subtle ways in which men, rather than women, are able to advance up the administrative ladder. Stephanie Marshall points out the power of men's formal and informal networks:

> While men have developed support networks for years, women have not done so. Men generally help other men climb the ladder—they take care of each other, they pass the lessons on, and they help others to achieve positions of influence. Unlike the woman who must prove herself over and over again, once men get into the club, they are protected. Men see this supportive behavior as expanding their sphere of influence. Women who have had very little experience in this kind of networking, perceive it as diminishing their sphere of influence. Because the competition is so keen, women have not been trained to support each other.

When older administrators select protegees for grooming as leaders, they seek to replicate themselves. Because the vast majority of established leaders are white males, women and minorities are unlikely to capture their attention. When mentoring is available, it can enhance women's career mobility. In a study of twenty-four female administrators, Judith Dodgson reported that "mentors were deemed extremely important when the women progressed from teacher to vice-principal." When reaching for senior administrative positions, mentors were not as necessary for encouragement, but served as advocates, confidants, and friends. According to Dodgson, "the principal must therefore be educated to understand the role of mentor and be encouraged to seek [female] protegees."

Some Practical Problems

Overt discrimination is not the only cause for the small number of women in administration. The trend toward consolidation of schools has meant that fewer positions are available. Consolidation has been responsible for the closing of nearly 100,000 schools, many of them small, rural, and headed by women.

Another problem is the lack of timely and comprehensive data, which severely hampers efforts to document women's progress. As Yeakey and her colleagues observe,

> One consequence of the failure of policy-makers and researchers to recognize issues of gender and race is the absence of precise, comparative, current, and historical data on the numerical distribution of racial and ethnic minority group members and women in educational administration.

Through Project AWARE, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has recently filled the vacuum left by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which regularly published survey data during the 1970s. (Because not all states are represented, data in this chapter should be interpreted with caution.)

Another problem for women has been the effort to attract more men into education, especially at the elementary level, supposedly to prevent the "feminization" of the schools. To attract men into the field, it was considered necessary to offer them the incentive of possible advancement. Men entering education thus compete with women for administrative positions; supposedly, the men *must* be promoted or they will leave the field, so their promotions often come at the expense of qualified women.

As a result, male principals frequently have less specific teaching experience than do women and serve for a shorter period, because they are upwardly mobile. This situation is particularly unfortunate because it prevents women from becoming principals and substitutes less-committed men.

In more than just a few principalships, we find a "bright young man" on the way up, who temporarily serves as principal. His primary concern is not to do the job well so much as to use it as an avenue for promotion. Over a decade ago, William Seawell and Robert Canada observed that the elementary principalship demanded extremely talented individuals committed to making this job a lifetime career, not just a rung on the administrative ladder. Today this problem is even more acute, as McCormick notes in her article on expected shortages of gifted school administrators. According to the administrators interviewed, many school executives are older than in the past, overburdened by job and family pressures, and choosing early retirement. Even worse, there don't seem to be as many bright teachers willing to enter administrative ranks.

If factors other than discrimination are responsible for the exclusion of women from administrative positions, the basic problem is still the secondary role women are assigned in all parts of society. What else can account for women's displacement by the closing of small schools? Similarly, why else should the opportunity for promotion be essential to the male educator, even as it limits the opportunities for qualified women?

The Black Administrator: Still Segregated

"Common sense" suggests that the apparent successes of the civil rights movement should have significantly improved the position of blacks in educational administration. Blacks were once the victims of systematic patterns of discrimination. But now, nearly thirty-five years after the Supreme Court's historic desegregation ruling in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, individuals may still be prejudiced, but, in public institutions like school systems, surely the black educator is treated in the same way as everyone else.

This analysis is attractive because it is both plausible and optimistic. It implies that the situation is under control and that desirable changes are taking place. Unfortunately, such optimism can flourish only amidst ignorance. Since *Brown*, the number of black administrators has declined dramatically. This is most true of the decision-making positions, where the real power is in the hands of white males.

Just as nonblack racial minorities in school administration have been ignored by writers, so in recent years scant research has been directed at the situation of blacks in administration. The few studies that have addressed the subject tend to focus on black women administrators, evidence, perhaps, of the impact of the feminist movement and the limited effectiveness of affirmative action for minorities.

Disappearance of the Black Leader

For many years, the southern pattern of "separate but equal" school systems tended to help the black school leader. The logic of segregation dictates the complete separation of the races. This can be accomplished only if black school systems are entirely black—teachers, students, superintendents, and principals. In addition, in a society in which racism is an institutionalized value, a principalship of a black school or superintendency of a black system could not seem very desirable to most whites. This fact, too, would help blacks become administrators, if only by default. The motivation may not have been commendable, but the result was that, in dual school systems, there were countless opportunities for black administrators.

This situation did not change immediately after the Supreme Court outlawed "separate but equal" systems, but once it became clear to the states that the decision could not be circumvented, the dual school systems were gradually dismantled. This dramatically altered the status of the black administrator. Blacks supervising other blacks may have been acceptable in the South, but the possibility of black officials giving orders to white teachers and overseeing the education of white students was virtually unthinkable.

The disappearance of the black administrator, though the Court could hardly have anticipated it, has clearly come about as the result of southern compliance with the *Brown* decision.

During the 1960s, as Gregory Coffin points out, "the number of black high school principals in 13 southern and border states dropped more than 90 percent....If casualties among black elementary school principals were included, the result would be even worse," he states.

Thus, people who were qualified by training and experience to administer the new unified school systems were prevented from doing so because of their race. Many of the dismissed blacks undoubtedly were replaced by people less qualified, except for the vital racial criterion, to run the schools. The loss of expertise and resulting decline in educational quality are incalculable.

By 1975 things were not much better. At that time, Samuel Ethridge calculated that to reach "equity and parity" (that is, for the percentage of black principals to equal the percentage of blacks in the total population) the nation would have to hire 5,368 more black principals. Almost half this number were needed in the seventeen southern and border states.

Data showing the pattern of representation of blacks in school leadership positions during the past decade are listed in table 2. Jones and Montenegro's most recent survey shows that only about 1 percent of superintendents and about 10 percent of principals are black. Moreover, the improvement that we noted in women's representation in administrative positions is not as evident in the case of blacks, whose representation has increased only slightly during this decade. Indeed, Feistritzer's data (inexplicably differing from those of Jones and Montenegro) show that only 6 percent of principals are black, a decrease from 1978, when, according to EEOC data, 8.3 percent were black.

Table 2. Representation of Blacks in Educational Administration

Survey Date	*Source*	*Superintendents*	*Assistant Superintendents*	*Principals*	*All Administrators*
1987-88	Jones & Montenegro (1988)	1.16	7.16	10.26	9.95
1987-88	Feistritzer (1988)	1	—	6	—
1984-85	Jones & Montenegro (1985)	1	6.5	9.79	9.11
1981-82	Jones & Montenegro (1985)	.7	6.5	7.7	8
1978	EEOC data from Jones & Montenegro (1985)	—	—	8.3	—

All figures are percentages.

More than quality education disappeared with the black principal. In the Old South, educational administration was one of the few vocations in which a black could achieve affluence, power, and middle-class respectability, and this opportunity vanished. In addition, a black principal was often the most prominent black citizen, a community leader. Finally, for black children, the black educator was often the only available role model that suggested it was possible for a black to exercise authority or leadership, and this, too, was lost.

The loss of administrative ability and community leadership was nearly absolute, since the talents of displaced blacks were almost always discarded by the school systems. According to J. C. James, a black principal might be transferred to the central office of a district as "the highly visible token of desegregation," or, worse, given "some other title completely foreign to all known educational terminology, a desk, a secretary, no specified responsibilities or authority, with a quiet prayer that he will somehow just go away." Doubtless any black administrator with ambition and self-respect would himself echo that quiet prayer.

Laws Change: Discrimination Persists

As the legal system of segregation has broken down, it has been replaced by urban segregation based on residential patterns. The white, male decision-makers in many of these systems have, like their southern predecessors, decided that these all-black schools are appropriate places for black administrators.

Thus the belief that blacks are capable of supervising only black districts remains as strong as ever. In the seventies, Charles Moody examined twenty-one major school systems with black superintendents, seventeen regular and four acting. In each of these systems, the majority of the students were black, and every permanent superintendent worked in a community where more than half the residents were black. In addition, most of the districts had black majorities on their school boards.

Moody discovered several other facts about these districts that may explain why they were considered suitable for black superintendents. Virtually all the superintendents he studied had taken over districts with serious financial problems. From the evidence, he concludes that "when blacks are appointed it is often just because the district is unattractive." In addition, "black superintendents are not appointed in districts which provide them with the time and resources to develop educational programs relevant to their school community."

Black officials at all levels share a number of problems: difficult schools, ambiguous roles, and the unrealistic expectations of others. Robert Chapman reported on a study that compared what others expected of black principals in an urban school system with what the principals expected of themselves. The study showed that district administrators and most people in the black community expected the new principals to make a far greater difference in the schools than the principals themselves anticipated making. Thus the new black officials were placed in difficult situations to begin with and then confronted with the unreasonable expectations of others. In such a situation, someone is bound to be disappointed, and the principal's relative or "perceived" failure seems virtually inevitable.

The ambiguous role assigned to the black administrator is best illustrated by Robert Frelow's analysis of the plight of a typical black administrator below the rank of principal. The primary assignment for the new official was to serve as liaison to dissident black students in a school with a biracial enrollment and a primarily white staff. He was successful in this assignment but was not rewarded for his professional skill. Instead, it became clear that, by dealing with a specific group of students, he had provided his superiors with "a rationale for his exclusion from decisions that affect the whole system. He has, in effect, defined a peripheral involvement for himself." This kind of doublethink, which can turn success into failure, is typical of the way white supervisors treat black administrators.

This problem illustrates the need for blacks in the highest decision-making positions in school systems. Until blacks enter the real power positions, the role of all black administrators will remain peripheral. But the evidence that this has not yet happened is overwhelming. Frelow says, "only in a few instances have school districts chosen to employ blacks in decision-making, policy-influencing positions."

In his 1983 article, Charles Moody advises blacks who aspire to the superintendency on how to get into positions of power. The key is a networking process like the one needed by women:

> Black superintendents, consultants, professors, and other leaders can serve as encouragers, sponsors, nominators, and advisors to other Blacks. We must accept the fact that there is nothing illegal, immoral, or illicit about serving in one or all of those capacities to facilitate the career development and mobility of another Black.

The lack of blacks in policy-making positions flies in the face of studies showing that minorities have strong qualifications for management positions. After studying more than one hundred white and minority managers, John Miner concluded that minorities in management have unusually strong motivation to become managers. And Edward Adams found that black managers were perceived by their subordinates as exhibiting more consideration behavior (behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth) than did white managers.

Since the late seventies, it has been more and more difficult to find even the most basic data or information on blacks in educational administration. The literature is strangely silent on the topic. In the face of such frightening problems as declining enrollment and resources and public loss of confidence in the schools, interest in the problems of minorities has waned. Yet there is no reason to believe that the problem has been or is being solved. Although a few very visible blacks have achieved token administrative positions, the decline in the number of positions available makes it impossible for enough minority administrators to be hired to accomplish anything close to equity. Moreover, unlike the situation with women, very few minority graduate students are in the "pipeline" for administrative positions. And if the policy of "last hired, first fired" continues to be invoked in times of retrenchment, the situation will get even worse.

It seems that very little has changed. The location of the all-black school systems may have moved from the South to the cities, but these remain the only systems with room for black administrators. A black educator's chance of being appointed superintendent in a "white" district is probably not much greater now than it was when the Supreme Court issued its ruling in the case of *Brown*.

A Program for Change

Although the only permanent solution to the problems of women and minorities in school leadership is their inclusion in the decision-making process, there should be other, more immediate ways of improving the situation. Gradually, as more women and members of minority groups work into leadership positions, their acceptability in such positions will increase. In addition, if they gain some "line" positions, jobs that ordinarily lead to promotions, they will enter the pool of potential decision-makers.

The outlook is not encouraging, however, despite the 1972 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Act and the special efforts of affirmative action to redress racial imbalances. Ruth Cimperman expresses some common concerns:

> We seem to be losing whatever gains were made in the consciousness-raising 1970's and slipping backward in time to the 1950's norms of male and female roles. In fact, regulatory bodies, employers, and even women are becoming less concerned with equal rights and affirmative action policies.

Affirmative action policies have been criticized for lack of effectiveness, distasteful compliance mechanisms, and advocacy of preferential treatment. According to Carter Wilson, the policy's major problem is lack of commitment, since it "exists primarily in the realm of public discourse and not in the realm of political reality."

Seeing "nonpreferential" affirmative action as a logical next step, Jonathan S. Leonard documents occupational advances in both the public and private sectors between 1974 and 1980. According to Leonard, progress was substantial, considering the program's lack of "public consensus and vigorous consistent enforcement":

> The lesson drawn is that affirmative action programs work best when they are vigorously enforced, when they work together with other policies that augment the skills of members of protected groups, and when they work with growing employers.

One obvious way to produce change is by adopting corrective laws and regulations. Unfortunately, specific cases of discrimination are difficult to detect and nearly impossible to prove. Although the 1963 Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act were enacted twenty-five years ago, women's earnings have remained at 55 to 65 percent of men's wages. Clearly, laws alone will not bring about meaningful change.

In the previous edition of this chapter we proposed a six-point program to promote equality of opportunity for women and minorities:

- establish the hiring of women and minority administrators as a definite priority
- eliminate all forms of discriminatory treatment, such as different pay for equal work and enforced maternity leaves
- work for the establishment of a clearinghouse where the names of qualified women and minorities will be available
- establish a policy of actively recruiting women and minorities for administrative jobs
- encourage colleges of education to train more women and minority men for these jobs and adopt programs to meet their particular needs
- work to develop internship programs for potential administrators

In the remainder of this section, we assess progress that has been made toward reaching these objectives and point out work that remains to be done.

Priority on Hiring Women and Minorities

The first point has recently been given teeth by a Supreme Court decision that makes it possible for an employer to hire women and minorities to correct an imbalance in the work force. *The New York Times* (March 26, 1987) noted, "The ruling also marked the first time the Court had unambiguously held that without any proof of past discrimination against women or minorities by a particular employer, the employer may use racial and sexual preferences in hiring and promotions to bring its work force into line with the makeup of the local population or labor market."

Because employers still are not *required* to address racial or gender work force imbalances, it is difficult to predict the effectiveness of the new ruling.

Congress' passage in 1988 of the Civil Rights Restoration Act, which broadens the original Civil Rights Act of 1964, is likely to benefit minorities and women seeking employment in the public sector. The new law clearly specifies that *all* programs within any institution receiving federal funds must not discriminate on the basis of age, race, sex, or handicap. This new law might revive public institutions' commitment to affirmative action.

Elimination of Pay Inequities

The second point calls for nothing less than a complete restructuring of the American labor market. Despite legal and economic drawbacks, "comparable worth" has been proposed as a potential solution to pay inequity and job segregation problems. According to Carole Makela, the comparable worth debate has tried to balance "the interests of women and minorities against the interests of the economy as a whole":

> Arguments center around discrimination in pay in "women's occupations" versus the feasibility of systems for defining "worth" and the problems of finding resources to achieve equity once comparable worth is accepted in the population.

Julie Underwood O'Hara reviews occupational segregation and antidiscrimination legislation, focusing on women's failure to achieve pay equity or comparable worth through the courts. Although school districts are obliged to correct pay discrepancies involving comparable *work*, they are not compelled, unless mandated by state law, "to investigate or rectify occupational segregation in the school system or sex-based wage gaps," she says.

In the long run, equal pay for work of comparable value may be less significant than the more generic concept of equal pay for equal work promoted in the 1963 Equal Pay Act. Researchers Sheila Tobias and Sharon Bernstein Megdal warn pay equity proponents not to make comparable worth their entire agenda. They note that women *are* gaining access to administrative positions with control over hiring decisions, that "girls have different role models than their mothers," and that wage-sensitive women are making responsible decisions to lobby for more money, find new jobs, or enter other occupations. Barton Gethmann also argues against artificial means of "increasing pay rates of occupationally segregated women," because this practice could remove the incentive for women to pursue less traditional employment options. Educational administration is one such option for both women and minorities dissatisfied with teaching or other "deadend" jobs.

Another economic hardship that falls unequally on women who work is the unavailability of child care. American working women lack two major benefits available to women of most other highly industrialized countries—government-subsidized child care programs and paid maternity leaves. Valerie Polakow Suransky notes that "the U.S. has one of the most underdeveloped systems of child care in the western world."

Clearinghouse for Women and Minority Candidates

The third point, the creation of a clearinghouse for qualified candidates (both women and minorities), has not progressed beyond the idea stage. Such a central clearinghouse, containing the names of all available women and minorities aspiring to administrative positions, could be an aid to districts' recruiting efforts. Until such a national clearinghouse is established, school districts could send announcements of administrative openings to such organizations as the Northwest Women in Educational Administration (NWEA), the Southern Coalition for Educational Equity, the National Conference on Women in Education, the New England Coalition of Educational Leaders, Inc., the National Alliance of Black School Educators, the Career Women in Education, the Ford Foundation, and the American Association of School Administrators.

Active Recruitment

Because traditional recruitment methods have not solved and in fact may have contributed to the problem of women and minority representation in leadership positions, school districts must explore creative means of recruiting able candidates from these categories. One recruitment method, the use of consultants, is particularly problematic in the case of blacks, as Moody stated in 1983:

> If the most respected consultants are white, and they, for the most part are employed at the elite colleges and universities, which the majority of Blacks do not attend, then it would seem logical that Blacks would not be among the pool of students from which their nominations would be made.

So the issue becomes not a matter of simply having the necessary credentials but of having the "right" credentials from the best schools. And the best schools are, for the most part, private and expensive. It is difficult to be part of the all powerful "old boys network" if one lacks the financial status to obtain the prerequisites to power.

Research on the recruitment of women and minorities stresses, again and again, the need for networking, a means by which blacks and women can counter the old boys network by creating their own system, designed to help minorities help themselves. Moody recommends that:

> Black educational organizations such as the National Alliance of Black School Educators must develop a unit that will serve as a resource to school boards on a contractual basis in the selection of superintendents. Blacks who have served as consultants must become mentors to other aspiring Blacks. They must teach them how to be effective members of selection committees.

June Gabler refers to Judith E. Palmer's stages of growth in women's awareness and the need for a sixth "professional" stage. At this "professional" stage,

> the woman who has arrived works consciously to ensure a continuous flow of able new talent for the future. The "old boys" give the professional stage its due with their network, and there is no reason that "old girls" cannot do the same. Ultimately, of course, it

should be an "old peoples" network.

Whether recruiting women or minorities, school districts should establish informal contacts in colleges of education and also accept the occasional need to train the right person to meet the formal requirements of a position. Raymond Calabrese recommends that school officials also encourage aspirants to develop a strategic career plan that takes political realities into account. For example, certain communities may not be ready to hire female or minority administrators, while others may be more amenable to diversifying their administrative ranks.

See chapter 3 for additional suggestions of ways school districts can recruit, groom, and select the most qualified candidates, regardless of their sex or race.

Training Programs

The fifth point, that of revamping educational administration programs to train more women and minorities, is an absolute must. Concern about future school leadership has prompted the formation of at least one national commission favorable to minorities' and women's interests. The National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration—representing school executives, universities, teacher unions, school boards, and governors—in 1987 released its report, *Leaders for America's Schools*, published by the University Council for Educational Administration.

Among the report's recommendations are defining educational leadership, establishing a National Policy Board on Educational Administration, and initiating recruitment programs for women and ethnic minorities. The report urges school districts and professional organizations to identify promising minority and women candidates for administrative positions. At the same time, the report says, state and federal policy-makers should tighten affirmative action compliance and provide scholarships and fellowships that would encourage ethnic minorities to choose educational administration as a career. Universities and the private sector should also provide financial aid and other incentives to attract minority administration candidates.

Charol Shakeshaft (1987) recommends several practical steps educational administration training programs can take to better serve women: expanding course content to encompass women's administrative experiences, case studies of women administrators, and women speakers; interning women students with women administrators; encouraging research on women's managerial styles; adding women to educational administration faculties; and sponsoring workshops to help incorporate research on women into curricular materials. Although aimed at helping women, many of these suggestions also could be applied to minority men.

Internship Programs

Internship programs are particularly useful for women and minority aspiring administrators because they provide needed experience that is often denied these groups.

One example of an experimental internship program for women is the "Castle Hot Springs" training program described by Christa Metzger. Funded by the Ford Foundation, this Arizona-based program trained 238 women for administrative positions over a five-year period. The workshop agenda was built primarily around activities that simulated a job search. It also taught skills such as interviewing for a job and writing a resumé. Volunteer consultants were available during the program. According to Metzger, the program "changed the attitudes of potential and current women administrators about their own worth and their career opportunities."

Increasing numbers of new (first- and second-year) Arizona principals are graduates of the Castle Hot Springs workshop: 25 percent in the fall of 1980, 35 percent in 1981, 39 percent in 1983, and 48 percent in 1984. It is clear that this type of training is needed and effective for women and minority groups who have not had the benefit of an "old boys" network that could be counted on to pass certain skills and attitudes on, generation to generation.

Assessment centers, another form of internship training, are also helping to bridge the "experience" gap. The history of women and minorities suggests that both groups have often faced job rejection because of lack of appropriate experience, proving the old saw: You can't get the job without experience and you can't get experience without the job. Assessment centers are a way of breaking out of this vicious circle. M. Claradine Johnson and Rex Douglas report that "several of the women who received promotions as a result of the center experience indicated that data provided by the center represented the only evidence of administrative skills in their credentials."

Such experience not only offers the participants useful job preparation, but also gives them a chance to measure their real desire for the job in light of the actual responsibilities and pressures involved. In addition, it gives evidence of practical ability rather than abstract potential and so should promote better hiring decisions.

Ultimately, the solution to the problem of discrimination depends on the willingness of public education to commit itself to change. Once such a commitment has been made, a specific program, based on the circumstances in each school system, should not be difficult to devise.

Conclusion

The status of women and minorities in school administration seems clearly inconsistent with the ideals of a democratic, egalitarian society. But discrimination in this area is not merely morally repugnant; practically, it is destructive, since it narrows the base from which school leadership can be drawn.

Blacks and women alike suffer from stereotypes, but those stereotypes are not identical. The role of blacks in administration is limited by the fundamental assumption that the races should be separated. There are jobs for black administrators, but few of these jobs include supervising white teachers or students.

Although working women have gradually demolished the wife-and-mother stereotype, their status has not necessarily improved. The vast majority of women workers are relegated to low-status, low-paying jobs and retain primary responsibility for housework, food preparation, and child care. Women who do manage to overcome role-discrimination and ascend to administrative heights risk being labeled "pushy" or "superwomen" for trying to have it all. When entrusted with the "male" supervisory roles, women must often waste precious time and energy proving themselves over and over again to skeptical bosses, board members, or coworkers.

There are several ways in which this situation can change. One way is to reverse the pattern of white "male-defined" research that contributes, in large part, to discrimination in the first place. Second, women and minorities can develop networking systems to combat the "old boys" network that has kept them out of policy-making positions for so long. And finally, the public school systems, inspired by the recent Supreme Court decision and the new Civil Rights legislation, can implement fairer hiring policies aimed at correcting the imbalance that exists in the work force.

The problem of underrepresentation of women and minorities in positions of educational leadership will cease only when sex or race is irrelevant in hiring, when qualified women and minorities are as routinely included in the decision-making process as white males are today.

Part 2
The Structure

Chapter 5

School-Based Management

John Lindelow and James Heynderickx

School-based management is a system of administration in which the school is the primary unit of educational decision-making. It differs from most current forms of school district organization in which the central office dominates the decision-making process.

Each school is a relatively autonomous unit in districts utilizing school-based management. Decisions concerning expenditures, curricula, and personnel are made by school-site personnel with the participation of parents, students, and members of the community. The school board continues to formulate and define the district's general policies and educational objectives. The role of the central office, however, is altered from that of "dictator" of individual schools' actions to that of "facilitator" of those actions.

This chapter presents the case for school-based management as put forth by its proponents, with particular attention given to the key role of the principal in such a management system. Because school-based management is a response to what many educators perceive as an overcentralization of power within school districts, these pages necessarily contain criticisms of the centralized administration systems most districts now employ.

The concept of site management has great promise and has proved successful in numerous districts where it has been implemented. In the following pages, the school-based management concept is examined in detail. The rationale of decentralized management is reviewed, and several school systems that have successfully implemented school-based management are described. The key role of the principal is discussed, along with the complementary role of the central office. Next the school site's control over curriculum, personnel, and budget matters is examined, followed by a review of the roles of the staff and community in the decision-making process.

The Rationale

In many districts the administration of education has been centralized to the point of diminishing returns, say critics. A new balance of decentralization and centralization—autonomy and control—needs to be struck. By reassigning a good deal of decision-making authority to the school-site, school-based management can redress the current overemphasis on centralization and control.

In this section, the history of American education is briefly examined to determine how school districts became so centralized in the first place. The deficiencies of this overcentralization are outlined, followed by the merits of decentralization to the building level.

Autonomy and Control Through History

To gain perspective on the current interest in school-based management, it is useful to examine the history of the centralization-decentralization debate, not only in education but in society in general.

For as long as governments have existed, there has been a tug-of-war between the concepts of autonomy and control. Indeed, Amitai Etzioni attributes the failures of both past empires and contemporary organizations to an inability "to locate a productive balance between autonomy and control" (quoted by Luvern Cunningham). It is really no surprise then that educators have not yet found the perfect blend of freedom and form.

Prior to 1900, complete local control of schools was commonplace. Authority was placed in the hands of local boards of education who determined curriculum, hired personnel, purchased materials, and controlled the maintenance and utilities of buildings. The principal was a key member of the authority structure. "Up until about 1920," states Paul L. Houts, "the principal possessed near total autonomy," including authority for "teacher selection, placement, promotion, and salaries."

School management during that period, however, cannot be characterized as a "perfect" system. Members of the board of education became important politicians, and jobs in the school system were often granted as special favors. Bribery and kickbacks were also common. In short, state Harvey J. Tucker and L. Harmon Zeigler, "school politics, like the machine politics of the urban area of which it was a part, provided responsiveness *and* corruption." The response of public school reformers was to "depoliticize" education by hiring nonpartisan, professional educators to manage school systems.

The public's desire for change became part of a far greater movement at the turn of the century—the coming of the industrial age. For public education, this meant sweeping reforms to increase standardization and centralization, and a new emphasis on rote learning and obedience. "Schools were perceived as factories," states Carl Marburger, "with students the products that came out at the end of the assembly line." Management became "top-down," with layers of managers to supervise activities and quality control.

Between 1920 and 1970, the management of education became increasingly centralized and insulated from community politics. As districts grew larger, school boards became smaller, and the representative governance of the lay boards slowly melted away. As the reform movement progressed, the new central school boards transformed superintendents from clerks into major policy-makers. The autonomy of the building principal slowly eroded, so that the principals and not the superintendent became viewed as the "clerks." School boards and superintendents relinquished principals' powers in collective negotiations with teachers' unions, often with little or no consultation with principals.

Sometime in the last decade or two, the swing of the pendulum apparently reached its limit, and some school systems have moved toward a less centralized system of governance. Community involvement, decentralization, diversity, shared governance, and school-based management are the key words of this new reform movement. For the principal, this new movement may well mean a return to a true leadership role.

The Deficiencies of Centralization

Strong arguments against centralization are continually made by leading educational specialists. John Gasson, for example, has this view of the status quo:

> The central office hierarchy regards the school principal as an agent of the superintendent. The principal may ostensibly run the school, but in reality he acts as a vehicle to transmit and implement edicts from the office. As a result, the principal and his teachers have become cogs fixed into a large, impersonal machine that depends on the machinist (superintendent) to keep every cog uniformly lubricated.

Centralized educational management, states Lawrence C. Pierce, operates on the premise "that education is a science and that with enough information, educational professionals can agree on the best school program for all children." Although these programs are designed with good intentions, their implementation can result in required uniformity and an intolerance for difference. The special needs of individuals and minority groups are often overlooked when programs are designed for the "mythical average" of the majority.

A rigid, hierarchical structure extending from central office to classroom, critics say, does little to foster innovation and creativity, which require a flexible and supportive atmosphere. "Inflexible bureaucratic structures," states Houts, "can often serve as the best inoculation against individuality and originality."

The above criticisms suggest that the "large-scale industrial bureaucracy" model of management has been overapplied to the field of education. In *A Place Called School*, John I. Goodlad notes how public criticism is often focused more on our system of schooling than on the schools themselves. This may be part of a "general decline of faith in our institutions and especially the bureaucratic insensitivity they are perceived to represent."

According to Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, today's best-run American companies realize that overcentralization and strict regulations can strangle productivity. In business and industry, successful organization is now characterized by simple form and a minimum number of administrative levels. Clear lines of communication and open opportunities for innovation can generate positive working attitudes and "professional excellence" previously thought impossible.

The Efficiency of Decentralization

Critics of school-based management often claim that granting authority to administrators at the building level will lead to a decline of accountability and the loss of academic and budgetary control from the central office. Proponents of school-based management respond that school principals and staff are ready and willing to accept the authority and responsibility.

Goodlad found that both "principals and teachers concurred in the desire for a rebalancing of power toward greater decentralization and localism." As a guiding principle, Goodlad believes that "the school must become largely self-directing." The instigation of change should originate and be formed within the school itself, instead of being mandated or planned by authorities outside the school.

Goodlad does not, however, visualize decentralization as "schools cut loose." Each school would remain linked to the district office, as if a hub, and to each other as an interacting network. The important change is that decisions concerning the welfare of the students would be made at the school, not at the hub. The principal could be visualized as the captain of a ship, with complete responsibility and authority.

Many superintendents and principals believe that the eight guiding principles presented in Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* should be applied directly to educational management. These principles stress the importance of moving authority "down the line," to place decision-making as close to the customer as possible. Central administration should be characterized by "simple form" and "lean staff," necessitating close contact with all other levels. The final principle involves the achievement of "simultaneous loose-tight" control. Although the best-run companies offer a great deal of autonomy to lower-level personnel, their people realize the responsibility that comes with authority. Autonomy and a sense of ownership can be powerful incentives for employees to achieve, but "tight" control is imposed if there is a breach of trust or expectations are not reached.

According to Peters and Waterman, "autonomy is a product of discipline. The discipline (a few shared values) provides the framework. It gives people confidence (to experiment, for instance) stemming from stable expectations about what really counts." In a school system, a policy of "loose-tight" control allows the central office to stress academic and budgetary goals without inhibiting the creative ideas and plans of those closest to the students.

Advocates of centralization and consolidation of school districts also claim that such actions reduce the cost of education and thus increase its "efficiency." Goodlad, Pierce, and others have criticized this definition of efficiency because it takes only dollars into account.

Goodlad's proposals allow "schools to take on individual, even alternative characteristics within a frame-work designed to ensure some accountability, the cost savings associated with the centralization of some but not all budgeting and other routines, and considerable equity." By allowing individual schools to develop their own long-term plans, the central office could retain its system of "checks and balances as well as the possibilities for unleashing the creative energies of concerned principals and teachers who now feel overly constrained by 'the system'."

Pierce believes educational efficiency should be defined "in terms of matching available resources with the educational needs of children in schools." Thus, centralized administration, geared to providing uniform services, is efficient only if the needs of its clients are uniform. "If they are different," states Pierce, "then centralized provision may be inefficient." As an alternative, decentralized administration can be much more flexible, matching educational services with the changing needs of students and parents. The encouragement of school program diversity can lead to "equality of educational outcomes rather than inputs."

School-based management also allows parents and students a larger "voice" in education. A parallel objective, districtwide open enrollment plans, would provide greater "choice." As schools gain more freedom from centrally mandated philosophies, they tend to diverge in their approaches to education. Open enrollment plans, if administered in such a way as to preserve racial and socioeconomic balance, could provide the consumers of public education with the long-awaited ideals of diversity and choice.

Examples of Implementation to Date

The most accurate information concerning the advantages and structure of school-based management can be found by observing systems currently in operation. Information for this section was obtained through both written sources and telephone interviews with superintendents and principals in seven districts nationwide.

In Florida and California, where state legislation encourages or requires the decentralization of some aspects of school management, new systems have been implemented as part of a broad educational reform. We outline the development of school-based management in Florida and California, looking closely at two districts in each state. In other districts throughout the United States and Canada, school-based management has been institutionalized without the provocation of state legislation. We review the progress of systems in Lunenburg (Massachusetts), Cherry Creek School District (Colorado), and the Portland School District (Oregon).

Florida

In the early 1970s, Florida's legislature passed a series of acts designed to transfer decision-making authority to the school site. This legislation was part of a broader legislative reform of state education and school finance that took place in the late 1960s. The legislative acts set "guidelines for educational accountability, comprehensive planning, annual progress reports, school advisory committees, and a comprehensive information, accounting, and reporting system," states the National Urban Coalition. In 1979, local school committees began to receive state funding. Although Florida's acts and measures did not "mandate specifically that decision-making be decentralized to the school level," as Pierce notes, they did significantly prune the state education codes to facilitate local control.

The implementation of school-based management in Florida has been uneven, despite the legislative mandates and the state funding. The Monroe County School District—reviewed below along with the Martin County system—remains one of the few shining examples of school-based management in the United States, whereas most of the rest of the state's school districts still move slowly toward decentralized decision-making.

Even though the implementation of school-based management has had only scattered success in Florida, the state is probably the furthest along of any in implementing the system. "School site management is most often talked about in those states that have either large, diverse school districts or a highly centralized state school system," said Pierce in an interview. In Florida, the sixty-seven school districts are county based. Thus, within one county there can be a wide range of communities that have very different educational needs. The weaknesses of centralization come to the fore in systems, such as Florida's, where the diversity within one district can be great.

School-based management began in Florida—as it has elsewhere—not as a grassroots movement, but as a reform movement promoted by legislative policy-makers, said Pierce. Where it has been successful or partially successful—as in Monroe and Martin counties—it has been so because of a superintendent who strongly believes in the concept. As is often the case, it takes a great deal of energy and persuasion to break down people's conceptions of what can or should be.

Monroe County

Monroe County (1988-89 enrollment about 7,860) is composed of a long chain of islands stretching over one hundred miles from the Florida mainland into the Gulf of Mexico. Between 1971 and 1976, the school district moved from a centralized to a school-based management system because of state reform legislation and the unique geography of the county.

Armando Henriquez, the superintendent of Monroe County School District since 1969, has been a major factor in the successful implementation of school-based management in that district.

Together with the central office staff and principals, Henriquez decided to implement a system of school-based management after three years of centralized mandates had not significantly improved education in the district. Starting in the 1972-73 school year, principals were elevated from middle management to top management, and the district shifted its training emphasis from central office personnel to building personnel. In the first year, principals spent more than eighty days outside of their buildings undergoing extensive training in team management and decision-making skills. Over a period of five years, school-based management principles were phased in slowly. Four of the state's colleges collaborated in the development activities, and grants were received from the National Institute of Education and the Florida Department of Education.

In the Monroe County system, funds are allocated to schools according to number of students and special school needs. Each school decides how it will spend its funds and what its educational goals will be.

The schools are run by "teams" that usually consist of the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, department heads, and other inhouse personnel. According to Henriquez, 99.9 percent of the decisions reached by the team are based on consensus. The same decision-making process is used by district management teams headed by the superintendent.

Each school also has an advisory committee composed of parents, teachers, students (at the secondary level), and nonparent citizens. Although state law requires that these fifteen-to-twenty-five member committees be involved in establishing goals and plans, their real influence is determined by the principal and school team. According to Henriquez, the advisory committee's authority depends on the relationship between the professional staff and the community.

After hearing the advice of the school teams, the principal approves a consensus decision or makes a decision on his own. Recognizing the authority of the principals, the central office acts as a "facilitator."

Each year, Henriquez and his top-level staff meet with the principals during an annual administration retreat starting the first week of August. Principals are presented with an analysis of new state mandates and the Florida postlegislative review, recommendations of areas where increased teacher input and consensus decision-making could take place, and any additional training that may be needed.

Henriquez reports that the most significant changes in the past five years have been in the way he and the central office "select, train, and induct new principals" into the system. "We try to determine what type of principal, what type of leader, would best meet the needs of that school site." New state legislation requires prospective principals to attend assessment centers where behavioral performance is documented, complete a training program, and then enter an internship and/or an interim principalship before certification. These new measures "minimize the chances of error we experienced in the past when relying heavily on an interview process," Henriquez said.

In the Monroe County School District, the teachers' union is reacting very favorably to the system. Teachers have a positive student-teacher ratio and can buy their own materials and supplies. Because they have a sense of "ownership" in the decisions made at the school, Henriquez believes that over 99 percent of the teachers would say they prefer his district to any other. "That's what school-based management is all about," said Henriquez. "It's giving people an opportunity to have an input." The trade-off for that input, however, is that it takes a lot of extra time and effort to make the participatory process work.

The strength and success of school-based management in Monroe County may also be seen in its response to difficult challenges. For several years, the district's enrollment declined. Principals were faced with decisions concerning the reduction of staff and the cutting out of purchases of materials and supplies. Morale and popular support for school-based management declined in "places where there had to be some drastic and severe cuts," said Henriquez. In 1985 and 1986, the enrollment increased, and attitudes grew positive again as schools developed and expanded their programs.

Henriquez pointed out that Florida's educational reform movement has created a stressful situation as the new requirements are implemented. New extended-day legislation, requiring seven periods a day in high schools instead of five, has reduced the time available for principals to interact with teachers and district staff. To preserve such time, Henriquez reports that schools in his district are becoming "smarter, quicker, and more efficient" in processing information and organizing the routine of the school day.

Despite problems still to be solved, Henriquez reported no effort to move away from school-based management in his district. "It's a definite part of our organizational design," Henriquez stated, "and too many of our people are committed to it."

Martin County

The Martin County School District (1988-89 enrollment about 10,730 students) in southwest Florida initiated a system of school-based management in 1976. According to James Navitsky, superintendent since 1967, the change was precipitated by teachers' and parents' requests to participate more in the system, as well as an anticipated period of rapid growth.

"We spent the first five years of the program not only training principals, but also teachers and individual community persons for school advisory group chairmanships," said Navitsky. When the first changes were made, however, four or five principals chose not to accept the new responsibility and changed positions. Current principals, he said,

> have greater personal satisfaction than county staff people. In fact, the direction of the movement in the district and in the administration has been to the school level. People who have had major district positions, as high as directors of curriculum, are moving off into principalships.

Schools in the Martin County School District have near complete autonomy. With input from teachers, staff, and school advisory groups, principals make the final decisions concerning budget, curriculum, and personnel. Principals design the budget for new and continuing programs, utilities, busing, and special education. Only the food service continues to be centralized.

Schools can also design their own curriculums, as long as they meet the strict state guidelines of what can and should be covered in various grade levels. Textbook selection is restricted to three or four standard series.

In the area of personnel, "principals are responsible for the selection of every employee in their schools," said Navitsky. Policies vary, but in most schools teaching team leaders assist in the selection process.

One of the most positive effects of decentralization in Martin County, Navitsky believes, is the public's readiness to help pass new legislation or to alter funding levels. "When we really need something, we find that the intensity of the support effort is heard much more quickly than in a centralized system."

Navitsky noted that another interesting phenomenon at the community level is an absence of controversy concerning sexual education and other school issues. Throughout the district, Navitsky noted "much stronger support of the individual schools" by citizens.

The process of decentralization, Navitsky said, requires

> the commitment of those people who initially have authority to delegate responsibility. There is power at the central level. There are ground rules by which everybody must operate, but they don't have to be as extensive as most people might think.

The most difficult challenge is the release of authority while retaining responsibility, "especially when things are happening you don't like," he said. The first impulse is to use districtwide measures to control a situation, "but we try to resist that in every case possible. As a rule, time will be on our side."

The next step in Martin County, Navitsky said, will be to increase involvement of parents in the decision-making process. "Since we've been willing to share our authority at the district level, teachers now do not feel insecure in allowing parents to have some say as to what is taught, or at least knowing, understanding, and sharing."

California

As in Florida, the move toward decentralization in California was stimulated in part by state legislation. The Early Childhood Education Act directed state funds to individual schools to improve education in the first three grades. The act also had "well defined requisites for parent involvement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of related school programs," according to the National Urban Coalition.

In 1977, the Early Childhood Education Act was incorporated into the

California School Improvement Program (AB 65). Each school in the program received state funding to form a school site council composed of the principal, teachers, other school personnel, parents, and students (at the secondary level). The California State Department of Education, in a document designed to help districts and schools establish councils, outlines these council responsibilities: "developing a school improvement plan, continuously reviewing the implementation of the plan, assessing the effectiveness of the school program, reviewing and updating the school improvement plan, and establishing the annual school improvement budget."

Encouragement for California's move toward school-based management was also provided by a loose-knit consortium of twenty-five superintendents, according to James Guthrie. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the superintendents—most of whom were from Southern California—started to meet informally to work on the idea of school-by-school budgeting with the hope that it could improve the delivery of educational services and increase accountability.

As in Florida, the implementation of school-based management has been slow in California. Some districts that started the system, such as Newport-Mesa, went back to centralized systems. In a few scattered districts, though, school-based management has been a success. Two of these successful districts are Fairfield-Suisun Unified and Irvine Unified.

Fairfield-Suisun Unified

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District (1988-89 enrollment about 17,770) began its move toward a decentralized management system in March 1973. The district's objectives included finding the best management system, developing school-based management, providing for community and staff input to the budgeting process, and "improving the community's knowledge of the school district by establishing a district information system," wrote Barbara Wells and Larry Carr, principals at Fairfield-Suisun Unified, in 1978.

Because the district gave more control of the budget to school administrators and school-site councils, Wells and Carr stated, principals received "the substance to change priorities that affect the quality of education at the school site." Interviewed in 1986, Carr said that in the past five years the principals' control of salaries has been centralized again, but that schools still receive discretionary funds with which they design their own budgets. School-site administrators, teachers, and parents can plan their own program, select materials, and purchase equipment as long as they have enough money, Carr said.

Although the schools do not receive total budget authority, Ernest Moretti, the district's superintendent, believes the experience of budgeting utilities and programs at the school site has many positive effects. As teachers and staff become more involved with decision-making, their sense of "ownership" increases while they become more aware of what different programs cost.

The district has established the departments of maintenance, data processing, printing, food services, transportation, and personnel as independent budgeting units. Schools buy the services out of their budgets each year and can carry over any surpluses they have. Large maintenance expenditures and other emergency expenses, however, come out of the district's undistributed reserve. Because schools have control over their budget, building personnel have learned to be very ingenious in using and saving funds, particularly on utilities.

Special programs, including Saturday School for students with truancy problems and opportunity classes in the secondary schools, were developed with input from the individual schools yet were implemented with district funds. "For these programs, we don't ask the schools to put up their own money," said Moretti, "so they still have their discretionary funds."

In the personnel area, a panel of teachers and community members aids in the selection process, but the principal has the final hiring authority (with the restriction that intradistrict transfers be placed first). Upon entering a brand new school in 1986, Carr reported having "the opportunity to hire almost the entire staff."

The district office evaluates the academic standards of individual schools by using special state assessment programs and a management monitoring system. Test scores are reviewed and surveys of parents, teachers, and secondary students are made to allow a wide range of input and opinions about how each school is operating. Once the information is accumulated, according to Moretti, it is made available to the schools so as to provide insight into possible changes or new programs.

For school-based management to work, Moretti believes that the district staff "must buy in" and supply the services and support necessary for schools to develop independent plans and objectives. "The key is really trust," said Carr. "There has to be a great deal of trust, both in the district office out to the schools, and the schools back to the district office. We have been fortunate that trust does exist."

Irvine Unified

The Irvine Unified School District (1988-89 enrollment about 22,540) was created by election in 1972. It consisted at that time of six elementary schools and one high school. Today, there are twenty-seven schools in the district, and the district's enrollment continues to grow.

"From the district's inception," states the National Urban Coalition, "the superintendent and school board had agreed that the school site was to be the basic unit of management." According to Superintendent Stanley Corey, the school-based management system has operated "very well" through a period of turbulent growth in the district.

From the beginning, principals in the district were responsible for goal setting, needs assessment, reporting educational results to the community, budgeting, program planning, and staff selection, development, and evaluation. The one condition is that the principal's staff be fully involved in all important decisions. "That's the trade-off," said Corey. "He can have lots of autonomy as long as he shows me it's participative. If he can't handle that, then we have to get a new principal."

Due to a districtwide fiscal crisis, the school-site budgeting system has been modified in recent years. Discretionary funds the schools use to design their own budgets have been reduced, and many state and general funds are now offered on a competitive basis.

Corey reports that school-based management in his district has also been affected by a "statewide reform movement which has as its centerpiece the notion of standardized curricula and higher degrees of conformity." The enforcement of curricula uniformity, however, should have only a slight effect in the district, Corey believes. "Our site discretion is essentially one of means and methodology. Curriculum being the content to be taught, the methodology is a matter of individual style and knowledge."

Despite the changes necessitated by outside forces, school-based management is considered a major success in the Irvine Unified School District. Assessment results have continued to climb for fourteen years, the schools score in the low- to mid-nineties on the California Assessment Measures, and students in special education programs are finding jobs and independence.

"The community has internalized the management structure," Corey stated. "They expect the involvement both at the site level and district level, and they do participate." Each school participating in the California School Improvement Program has a site council, while all other schools have a school advisory forum. The principals retain final decision-making authority but are heavily accountable to these community-involvement bodies.

Corey said the district's principals understand that with the type of discretion they enjoy comes heavy responsibility:

> In this type of system, there are two types of forces at work. One is a centrifugal force which tends to drive people out from a central tendency with the independence they have. You have to balance that with a centripetal force to hold them together as an organization and a unit. We have done that through participation at the district level in policy and curriculum formation.

Lunenburg, Massachusetts

The Lunenburg Public School District (1988-89 enrollment about 1,600) began independent alterations of its school-site management structure in 1982 due to severe reductions in funding. William C. Allard, the superintendent at that time, was the main author of the changes.

"I have long felt that the principal must be the total educational leader of his building," Allard wrote in 1983. A reorganization of authority made the principal responsible for "curriculum, staff evaluation, student evaluation, discipline, purchasing, and monitoring of achievement and staff morale" in his or her school.

The greatest change in the individual schools was the replacement of department heads with interdisciplinary program coordinators. By developing coordinators of related disciplines (humanities, research sciences, applied science, arts), groups of teachers could meet as a single group "to discuss every aspect of their program, budgets, staffing, and future curriculum changes."

Charles Lamontagne, Lunenburg's current superintendent, told us the changes Allard made were effective and necessary. "The input and the opinions of people in developing assessment information, new programs, and new financial proposals are very helpful, especially in a small district where we don't have a lot of legwork people."

State law in Massachusetts currently requires all district budget and personnel decisions to be made by the superintendent. In the Lunenburg School District, however, the central office has been reduced to "the superintendent and a few clerks helping him," said Lamontagne. "There is no internal central office organization with traditional personnel. There are no assistant superintendents for curriculum, coordinators to articulate curriculum, supervising staff, or business organization staff."

The involvement and input of school administrators and community involvement groups are essential if good decisions are to be made. According to Lamontagne, the principals are now the superintendent's "co-decision makers."

Cherry Creek School District, Colorado

The Cherry Creek School District (1988-89 enrollment about 27,250) in suburban-metropolitan Denver has developed and refined its school-based management system over a long period. "It is to the point that when the district opens a new school, the principal gets a shell and must design and develop everything in it," said Principal Douglas Gowler in 1980. He reported having "95 percent or more autonomy" over personnel and curriculum in the Sagebrush Elementary School that he heads.

Even though the district has expanded from eleven to thirty-five schools in the past thirteen years, the central office staff remains very small. The individual schools perform many of the traditional central office functions, and the principals can be paid well for their extra duties.

"Our superintendent sees principals as curriculum directors, directors of special education, directors of finance, and so on, as well as principals," stated Gowler in a 1980 article. "He hires us to do all those things, and he gives us the freedom to do them. In other words, he lets us rise or fall on our own strengths and abilities."

In a 1986 interview, Gowler said that the eight principles presented in Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* should be considered by every school district. "All of those talk about staying close to the customer and keeping the decision-making as close to that customer as possible, which means we must give that authority to the local schools."

As an example, the teacher selection process at Sagebrush Elementary begins with meetings between Gowler and a teacher team with which the new teacher will work; together they develop a job description that is then advertised. After an initial screening by the district's personnel department, Gowler interviews his choice of the applicants and sends the best of these—those who could "teach under a tree"—to the teacher team and the team makes the final choice. The schools may also decide to hire paraprofessionals instead of professionals.

Gowler and the school's staff continually refine most of their own instructional materials, and they design according to the students' needs. The autonomy at the school level includes the choice of textbooks. "We do not use major publishers, and there's no pressure for us to do that," said Gowler.

Parents have been very much involved in Sagebrush Elementary ever since it was built, even before it was built. Community support, Gowler reports, is "fantastically strong." Gowler works with parents through the parent-teacher organization, and parents work closely with Gowler in developing school policy.

What makes the difference in Cherry Creek are commitment and trust, said Gowler. The staff are extremely committed to their school and spend extra time to make it work. "The sense of ownership really generates from within the school itself and then leads to its own success."

Portland School District, Oregon

The Portland School District (1988-89 enrollment about 53,000) has developed a "hybrid" form of site-based management, according to Superintendent Matthew Prophet. Throughout the ninety-two schools in the district, budget authority and personnel selection continue to be decentralized. In the area of curriculum, however, important compromises have been made in recent years.

Prophet was superintendent of the Lansing School District, Michigan, from the late seventies to early eighties. The district had been successfully decentralized for over a decade, but problems were developing that would lead Prophet and his successors to recentralize the management system.

In retrospect, both Prophet and Richard Halik, the current superintendent at Lansing, believe that the dissolution of the decentralized system was caused primarily by a lack of control of curriculum standards. The root problem could be pinpointed as the principals' freedom to choose textbooks and design curriculum for their schools. In Lansing, this resulted in too many different systems being developed; thus the central office was unable to compare a particular school's standards with those of other schools in the district. Contact with the district office and cross-school communication also began to decrease.

Prophet considered the problems that occurred in Lansing when decentralizing the Portland School District. An important ingredient in Portland's system is community and school-site input in decision-making.

Teachers and citizen groups participate in the most important issues, but it is the principal who makes the final decisions, sometimes exercising his "51 percent" of authority.

Prophet also reports that the schools receive "consolidated building budgets" allocated on a per student basis. Principals have control over nearly all annual expenditures and "decide how to use those resources to fit their needs." In hiring new personnel, it is the district's responsibility to conduct the primary screening of teacher candidates and maintain a pool of qualified applicants, but the final selection is made by the principal, teachers, and other participants at the school.

The most important change distinguishing Portland's system from the previous system at Lansing is the adoption by Portland of a basal text for each subject taught in each school. The district also provides centralized preservice teacher training to "delineate precise 'product' and content expectations" for each subject, according to Prophet.

Despite these changes, individual schools still retain important autonomy in the area of curriculum. "We still decentralize the method by which the subject may be taught," said Prophet. By retaining the choice of teaching methodology, as well as the selection of supplemental materials to be used with the basal text, principals and teachers can design "delivery systems" to meet the unique needs of their students, even though the content remains equal throughout the district.

In the Portland School District, all indicators suggest that Prophet's school-based management "hybrid" is operating exceptionally well. Over the past four years, the national academic rating of the students has increased from the fiftieth percentile to between the sixty-fifth and seventieth percentiles. "All kids are improving," said Prophet, "and the gap between the minority and nonminority kids is slowly closing." A new disciplinary code developed with teachers and parents has solved many problems, and the dropout rate has declined.

Community and staff support is very strong. Teachers, parents, and community members form local school advisory committees that work directly with the principal in making important decisions. There is also a separate budget review committee at each school. Prophet believes that community support may be the main reason why the district has no budgetary problems at this time.

"What existed as the proper balance between structure and freedom in the early seventies is no longer the same equation," Prophet stated. Federal, state, and local authorities now expect greater accountability and "standardized expectations." Careful delineation of content and final outcomes is necessary in large districts; nevertheless, the setting of those expectations and the deciding of what functions are to be centralized should still be done by community and school-site committees, Prophet believes.

"The main thing is to give people throughout the system a piece of the action," said Prophet. "If they have ideas and ways to adopt certain methods that they think are going to help the kids, and they really want to do it, that's half the battle."

The Transfer of Authority

In a school-based management system, the principal becomes the central actor. The great responsibility that the principal now shoulders is matched by an equivalent measure of authority. With both the responsibility and authority, the principal is free to become the leader of his or her school.

The relationship most changed by the implementation of school-based management is that between the central office and the school site. Because the site administrators will inherit power and authority primarily from the central office, the roles of central office administrators will change nearly as much as the role of the principal. Thus, before describing the principal's new role in detail, we outline the complementary role of the central office. And prior to that, the school board's role in a school-based management system is briefly reviewed.

The School Board

In a change to school-based management, the role of the school board would not change significantly. The board's primary duties would still be to give general direction for the district by providing goals and policy statements, keeping informed about the district's progress toward new goals, and acting as a decision-maker of last resort. Only if a board has involved itself in the details of school operations—for example, specifying the kinds of equipment that should be allocated to each school—would its role have to change in a school-based management system.

According to Paul Cunningham, a school board member in Cambridge, Maryland, the school board would not relinquish any of its power in a change to a decentralized budgeting system. The board's role would remain that of developing broad policies for the operation of the school district. As Cunningham notes, "when the board makes the decision to decentralize the decision-making process, it is exercising policy development of the highest order." Once the decision has been made,

> it is the responsibility of the superintendent to submit a plan for board approval. The board is not relinquishing any of its authority to fix the budget. In the event that a budget must be reduced, the superintendent is given the directive and the amount by which it is to be cut. The staff (including building principals), on the other hand, should determine where the cuts are to be made.

The redistribution of authority that accompanies school-based management can actually work to the advantage of the school board because, as Barbara Parker states, "the total school system becomes more accountable and those at the top can get more results." Parker quotes Oron South, an organizational development consultant to Monroe County during its change to school-based management, as saying that decentralized management gives board members "a greater sense of power—not so much to order people around, but finally to get something done."

Support from the school board is vital to the success of school-based management. In Martin County, Florida, Superintendent James Navitsky admits that "when something starts to go wrong," there is a strong temptation for the school board and central office "to go for the 'quick fix' and commit to telling 'thall shalt'." When a district utilizing school-based management is faced with difficult challenges, the resistance to stepping in often "depends on how committed your school board and superintendent remain," according to Navitsky. It is clear that the school board, like the central office, needs to share a great deal of trust and patience with school administrators if school-based management is to succeed.

The Central Office: Facilitator

In school-based management systems, central administrators shed some of their authority and become managers of the school system instead of its bosses. The district staff provides support and objective evaluations instead of mandatory directives. In short, they "facilitate, not dictate," as Matthew Prophet put it.

The principal and other school-site personnel design the budget, hire new instructors and other school personnel, and prepare the curriculum. The central office focuses on "developing student and staff performance standards, offering technical assistance to schools," determining how much funding each school should receive, and "carrying out systemwide planning, monitoring and evaluation," states the National Urban Coalition.

The chief business official in the district has traditionally been responsible for three main functions: maintaining tight fiscal control over school budgets, providing technical assistance to the schools, and acting as the comptroller, or monitor, of district expenditures. In a school-based management system, the principal becomes responsible for tight fiscal control, but the business officer continues the other two functions.

As John C. Prasch notes, schools should receive an annual budget based on number of students and program needs. At that point, the principals become "responsible for the requisition, management, distribution, and utilization of supplies within the building." The business officer and office of business services are then "responsible for the actual purchasing, warehousing, and distribution of supplies to buildings and for providing the necessary forms and establishing efficient procedures to facilitate the process."

Personnel at the school site determine what items to purchase and forward a requisition order to the purchasing officer at the central office. The purchasing officer orders the items, pays the vendor, and charges the school's budget accordingly. This process allows the central office to keep an eye on the schools' purchases and make sure that the schools don't overshoot their submitted budget.

In a school-based management system, the district personnel officer continues to be responsible for recruiting employees, collecting information about applicants, maintaining personnel records, and providing technical assistance to the school site. The principal and other building level personnel become responsible for the actual selection of staff for their school.

The chief instructional officer of the district should maintain the traditional functions of that office—providing technical assistance and general direction to schools and monitoring effectiveness—but should not dictate the details of the curriculum. To ascertain that students are competent in basic skills, the district should continue to monitor schools with both standardized tests and visitation. Although the individual schools must continue to meet the educational standards of the district, they should be free to achieve those goals in whatever way they see fit.

The superintendent will always be the chief administrator of the district and the one person responsible to the school board for administrative decisions. Experience in district after district has shown that strong support for school-based management by the superintendent is absolutely necessary for its successful implementation. Superintendents become increasingly dedicated to decentralized management once they realize how it can help them meet the responsibilities of their office in a more effective and efficient manner. As the entire system becomes more accountable and responsive to client needs, say proponents of school-based management, the job at the top becomes easier and easier.

The Principal: School Leader

> The renewal or remaking of society is imaged in the remaking, the restructuring of education, which, in turn, is epitomized by the remaking of the principalship.

These words of John Bremer reflect the growing consensus among educators that the leadership role of the principal must be exhumed and revived if education—and society—are to find new vitality. Legions of educators and researchers now attest to the importance of the principal to quality schooling. "One of the few uncontested findings in educational research," states Scott Thomson, chief executive officer of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, "is that the principal makes the difference between a mediocre and a good school."

Both Bremer and Thomson believe that considerable autonomy and authority are necessary for an effective principalship. Common sense and contemporary management theory agree, says Thomson, that true educational leadership can only be achieved when the principal is "freed from the blanket of directives and reports and meetings which now suffocate performance." The principal and school staff "should enjoy considerable latitude in decision making about program, personnel, and budget," within the limits of the general objectives set by the central office and board.

In Lunenburg, Massachusetts, Superintendent Allard made each principal the "total educational leader" of his or her school. "The total leader means that he must be responsible for everything that takes place in his building." By giving principals responsibility for curriculum, staff and student evaluation, discipline, and purchasing, Allard discovered that decisions could be "made faster and with more teacher and staff *input* than before" (his emphasis).

By establishing the principal as the "total educational leader," one person becomes truly accountable for what takes place in each building. In most districts, important decisions are made in the central office and passed down the line to principals and then to teachers. This separation of decision-making and implementation can lead to problems, states Marburger, when new reforms are "disregarded by those charged with carrying them out, especially if they had no voice in determining the decisions in the first place." The responsibility for educational outcomes is a hot potato, juggled from principal to teacher to central office and never seeming to come to rest.

What needs to be done, as Albert H. Shuster states, is to close "the gap between the authority for initiating and operating school programs and the responsibility for their success or failure." In line with this view, the Edmonton Public Schools (Alberta, Canada) has organized its school-based management system around such principles as the following (quoted by Daniel Brown):

> No one shall have authority to direct or veto any decision or action where that person is not accountable for the results.
>
> The organization should avoid uniform rules, practices, policies and regulations which are designed to protect the organization against "mistakes."

From all accounts, it appears that school-based management would mean work for the principal. According to the National Urban Coalition, the building site administrator "would have to attend a much larger set of managerial tasks tied to the delivery of educational services," including "program planning, development and evaluation, personnel selection and assignment, staff development and evaluation, and budget management." In addition, the principal would be further burdened by the extra time and effort required by shared decision-making processes at the school site.

The new responsibilities may discourage some already overworked principals from trying the system. Along with the extra burden, however, principals gain authority and control to guide their schools. The rewards of leadership and authority may well be sufficient compensation for the added administrative burden.

One way to ease the data management part of that burden is to make efficient use of computerized management information systems. Administrators at each school should have access to computers and software that permit the manipulation of budgetary and other data necessary for decision-making at the school site.

Most principals will respond positively to the opportunity to become autonomous school leaders, but some will not. A common figure given by school-based management consultants is that 20 to 30 percent of principals will not find the system satisfactory. Many in this fraction would rather continue to be middle managers for the district, and they may view the new management system as a threat.

The dramatic change in the principal's role necessitates extensive retraining of current principals. Without this retraining, the new management system is not likely to survive its first real challenge. Instead of staying with the new system when a crisis arises, people will tend to fall back on the workings of the familiar centralized system.

It is also important to reevaluate selection criteria for hiring new principals. The new leadership and management roles will require outstanding candidates. According to Allard, one way of preparing prospective principals is to restructure the responsibilities of assistant principals: they can be given training and exposed to the actual responsibilities of principals in a decentralized system as part of their preparation for the position. Such experience can also help in assessing whether each person is right for the job.

Three Critical Control Areas

Which kinds of decisions should be decentralized to the school site, and which should remain centralized? Results of a survey of California educators, states Pierce, support "the conclusion that decisions related to the delivery of school programs (personnel, curriculum and budgeting) can be effectively decentralized while those decisions which provide supportive service (transportation, maintenance, warehousing, data processing, etc.) should remain centralized." The administrators in school-based management districts interviewed in this chapter share these perceptions.

The three main areas in which principals and their staffs would gain authority in a school-based management system are curriculum, personnel, and budget.

Curriculum

In a school-based management system, the school site has the authority to design and focus curriculum. Within broad outlines defined by the board, the individual schools are free to teach in any manner they see fit. As long as the schools are attaining the educational goals set by the board, the district does not intervene. The central office provides technical assistance to the school sites in instructional matters and monitors the schools' effectiveness.

However, it is the principal's job to work with staff and parents to determine educational needs and tailor the school's curriculum around these needs.

In general, the boards and central offices in most school-based management districts establish an outline of educational objectives and leave the schools free to meet those objectives in any way they see fit. The central office may maintain a selection of curricula from which the schools can develop their own systems that are then screened by district administrators. In the Cherry Creek School District, Principal Doug Gowler and his staff have diversified their school's curricula by selecting a variety of published materials, as opposed to using textbooks and curricula recommended by the district. Large districts such as Portland require a common basal text, but each school retains autonomy in the way the content is taught and supplemented by other materials.

Prasch suggests a sample curriculum policy statement:

> To assist the school staff and to provide some degree of coordination among schools, the district provides a written curriculum in each subject area. This curriculum specifies goals, includes teaching plans, and identifies recommended materials. In most cases, schools may use methods or materials other than the recommended ones, provided they have the written permission of the associate superintendent for instruction.

This type of policy is similar to Matthew Prophet's delineation of educational "content" and "expected outcomes" in the Portland School District. What is expected of the schools is clearly defined, but how they achieve those goals is a matter of individual style and student needs.

In general, the implementation of school-based management leads to an increase in the diversity of educational approaches. Teachers and principals gain more freedom to design their own instructional programs, and parents gain more influence in the design of those programs. Some schools may opt for a back-to-basics focus, others for open classrooms. Still others may adopt both approaches and have "schools within schools."

Personnel

To tailor schools' educational programs to the needs and desires of the community, principals must have control of their major resource—teachers. In most districts with school-based management, principals make the final choice of who will work in their schools. The most common practice is for the central office to maintain a pool of qualified applicants. When a position opens up, the principal—often with involvement from teachers, staff, and community—selects from the pool. The district usually negotiates salaries, working conditions, fringe benefits, and grievance procedures with the union, but the actual decision to hire is made by the principal.

In many school-based management districts, the principal may choose to hire paraprofessionals instead of certificated teachers. In some districts, the decision must be reached mutually between the principal and school staff. In other districts, the decision can be made by the principal alone, as long as the school stays within the state staffing laws.

So far, resistance from teachers unions to school-based management has been minimal. One fear expressed by teachers is that principals might start acting as dictators if given increasing authority, so some unions want protection against this kind of mismanagement. Essentially, however, the concerns of teachers unions do not significantly conflict with the concerns of school-based management.

Budget

Budget control is at the heart of school-based management, as is attested by some of the alternative names for the concept, such as "school based budgeting" and "school site lump sum budgeting." Control of the curricula and of personnel are largely dependent on the control of the budget.

Most centralized districts allow principals control over expenditures for supplies and equipment only. Many school-based management districts, on the other hand, give the school a "lump sum," which the school site can spend in any way it sees fit. Although schools do not receive the money outright, they purchase the products and services they need through or from the central office. The schools make the decision to spend, and the central office carries out the schools' orders. This system allows the central office to continue to monitor school spending and intervene when a school is exceeding its budget or has other budget problems.

The first step of the budget process involves the allocation of lump sums to the individual schools. The amount may be determined with the aid of various per pupil rating schemes, some of which are quite elaborate. Whatever formula is used, the important point is that funds are allocated uniformly. Several principals in two Canadian districts that use school-based management told Daniel Brown they "would not want to return to 'squeaky-wheel budgeting', where allocations were affected by principals lobbying with central office staff."

In the second major step of the process, the school site prepares its budget. This is the most critical process in school-based management, for it is from this process that most of the advantages of decentralized management stem, in particular the flexibility of the school to meet students' needs and the feelings of ownership that people derive from making decisions at the school site. The budget should be prepared with input from the school's staff, community, and students (at the secondary level).

Budgeting at the school site, say proponents, increases the efficiency of resource allocation. In a centralized system, according to Prasch, "nothing is more debilitating to a staff's sense of ownership and responsibility than to be required to spend all of one's funds in a given category only because it's the end of budget year." By allowing schools to carry over surplus funds and to reallocate funds into categories with unmet needs, new goals can be achieved without budget increases.

"The biggest claim for School Site Budgeting/Management," notes JoAnn Palmer Spear, "is that decisions are made closest to the student and that's what really sells it." Teachers and other school staff become more aware of the costs of programs, the school's financial status, and its spending limitations. Old programs "fade away to permit the establishment of alternative new ones," says Charles W. Fowler. Budgeting becomes "markedly more realistic," he says, because the charade "of requesting more money than expected in hopes of receiving a reduced amount still sufficient for program goals" is ended.

Shared Decision-Making

Increased community and staff participation in school decision-making has been an important component of school-based management wherever it has been implemented. Teachers, parents, and oftentimes students participate in decision-making as members of school advisory councils, which are usually distinct from the traditional PTAs or PTOs. Advisory councils vary widely in form, but generally they are composed of the principal, classroom teachers, other school personnel, parents, nonparent citizens, and students (at the secondary level). In some districts, the principal meets separately with a staff council as well as with an advisory council. Although their input usually comes by way of the same council, the involvement of staff and community members are considered separately here.

In a new variation of school-based management, some districts are delegating almost all site authority to school-based management councils. The philosophy of this form of management focuses on the importance of shared decision-making with teachers, parents, community members, and students. School-based management councils are discussed at the end of this section.

Staff Involvement

It is possible, as noted earlier, to shift power and authority from the central office to the school without further decentralization. But sharing decision-making authority at the school site, states Donald E. Beers, "creates ownership and therefore leads to a more positive attitude towards the organization." Thus, it behooves the principal to involve teachers in policy decisions and give them more authority to design, develop, and evaluate their own curricula. To match this new authority, teachers should also be held responsible for their students' performance, states Pierce.

In some site management districts, policies and collective bargaining agreements require that principals involve teachers in decision-making. Other districts only encourage the principal to involve others. Thus, the extent of teacher involvement varies widely from district to district and from school to school. In general, all site management schools have actively engaged teachers to some extent.

"As the climate created by decentralization demanded that teachers be significant decision makers, they would gradually become more educationally responsible," states John Gasson. "They would teach according to their own beliefs, using the instructional materials that they had individually chosen for their particular setting." Eventually, they would become the "major recognized determiners of the curriculum."

Community Involvement

School-based management often allies itself with the community involvement movement. Both seek decentralization, but school-based management is more of an "administrative" decentralization that preserves the notion of professional control of education. The community involvement movement, on the other hand, is more "political" in nature and seeks to transfer real power to the community level. Here our discussion is confined to community involvement within a school-based management system.

The advantages of involving parents and other community members in school decision-making are well acknowledged. Public involvement enhances public support of the schools. Schools become more responsive to community and student needs. Parents can participate in decisions that affect their children and have more of a sense of ownership of their school.

The question that remains is how to achieve community input while retaining an accountable educational system. If advisory councils have only the appearance of involvement, they can create a barrier to true community input. On the other hand, if the advisory committees are given real authority, there is no way to hold them accountable for the decisions they enforce.

The only avenue left open—while still retaining the general structure of the educational governance system—is for school administrators to voluntarily accept and adopt the advice offered by community advisory councils. If the recommendations of the councils are repeatedly ignored or rejected, both effectiveness and membership will decline.

According to Goodlad's surveys, most parents want increased say in public education, but they would not have their authority supersede that of professional educators. There is no evidence to suggest that parents are "seeking to take over their schools." A common sentiment, however, was clear in Goodlad's data: parents

> would take power from the more remote, less visible, more impersonal authorities heading the system and place it in the hands of the more visible, more personally known, close-at-hand staff of the school and parent groups close to the school.

To use Peters and Waterman's terminology, parents would like to see decision-making moved "closer to the customer."

School-Based Management Councils

A mechanism for giving teachers, parents, and community members a formal role in decision-making from the very start of decentralization is the school-based management council, described by Marburger.

The first step in forming a school-based management council occurs when teachers, parents, and community groups voice their desire for involvement. The actual development of the council is determined by the support and commitment of the superintendent, the school board, and the school principals. Each council's structure is unique, responding to the philosophy and needs of a particular district. Procedures for selecting council members and defining their authority are specified in policies written at the very start of the process.

According to Marburger, membership of school-based management councils usually includes the principal; a specific number of teachers; school staff members; and specially trained parents, community members, and sometimes students. The principal may retain authority for some decision-making, such as personnel selection, but all other decisions concerning the school budget, curriculum, and new programs are made by the council through a consensus voting process. The principal serves as chairperson but cannot veto council decisions.

All forms of school-based management are based on a process of trust. For school-based management councils to be effective, the superintendent and school board must delegate authority to the local schools and trust the principals and their staffs to share their authority with the councils. At the school site, the members of the council must "trust in each other to join in making decisions that will be in the best interest of all the students at their school," Marburger states.

There are many reasons, of course, why school-based management councils may not be suitable for a district. Some groups may want to take control of the decision-making processes of schools. In the school-based management system of Martin County, Florida, parent advisory groups occasionally had to be restrained from "setting up their own central offices" and becoming "too dictatorial," stated Superintendent James Navitsky.

Despite these potential abuses, such councils are a logical extension of school-based management. In the Cherry Creek School District, Colorado, Principal Douglas Gowler reported that the establishment of trust between school administrators and teachers was an important prerequisite to the formal involvement of parents and community members. Eventually, many more districts with decentralized management systems may establish and grant authority to school-based management councils.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages, the essential elements of school-based management have been described, with special emphasis on the principal's role in a decentralized management system. In brief, a shift to school-based management would change the role of the principal from that of a middle manager for the district to leader of the school. As the school site replaces the district as the basic unit of educational governance, the principal becomes the central actor in school management with authority over curricula, staffing, and budget matters. The central office, which now dictates many of the actions that individual schools take, would become the facilitator of decisions made at the school site. Parents, teachers, and students would work with the principal to develop educational goals and implement decisions they helped make.

Numerous examples of working school-based management systems already exist, and much can be learned by studying these districts. Successful implementation requires, first of all, extensive retraining of central office and school site personnel. The biggest stumbling block in implementing school-based management is breaking down the conventions that people hold about what should or can be. With extensive retraining and education, so that all school and central office personnel understand the new system, the change can be made smoothly and the school can stabilize in its new management mode.

Successful implementation also requires strong support from the school board and superintendent. In fact, as Brian J. Caldwell notes, the initiative to implement decentralized budgeting "has invariably been taken by superintendents who have contended that better decisions will be made if resources are allocated with a high degree of school involvement."

Before it starts, the district must have a clear idea of the extent to which power will be decentralized. The authority that is to be given to the school site and to staff and community members should be decided in advance, to avoid confusion and conflict.

Finally, successful implementation requires a good deal of trust and commitment. The superintendent must trust school site personnel to do their jobs, and all concerned must be committed to making the system work. By all accounts, the system requires more work at the school site, but many educators believe that the rewards of autonomy and feelings of ownership are well worth the extra time and effort spent.

Chapter 6

Team Management

John Lindelow and Scott Bentley

The need to solve increasingly complex and sophisticated problems has led to change in almost every field of human endeavor. To deal with increasingly complex policy, administrative, and instructional issues, superintendents have relied more and more on the expertise of their management teams. Nearly every school district boasts a governing council drawn from the administrative staff.

Team management has been used to describe a variety of shared or consultative decision-making arrangements among school personnel. In this chapter, the focus is on management teams that include both central office and building administrators. We follow Harold McNally's definition of the *management team* as "a group formally constituted by the board of education and superintendent, comprising both central office personnel and middle echelon administrative-supervisory personnel, with expressly stated responsibility and authority for participation in school system decision making." Thus the management team involves a cross-section of experienced administrative professionals in a structured decision-making process, endorsed by the school board and the superintendent.

A formal agreement to collaborate on decisions does not, however, mean that a management team is at work. "Although development of such an agreement may be a good place to start or a way to renew the board's and administrators' commitment to the team concept," says Mark Anderson, "the evidence from successful teams clearly shows that what is practiced is more important than what is on paper." By looking at the actual experiences of management teams, we intend in this chapter to emphasize the conditions that help teams to succeed.

The Appeal of the Team Concept

The practice of using a collaborative group to manage a school district is as old as democracy. Recently, however, a number of powerful causes have sky-rocketed the formalized management team into prominence. Each cause emphasizes either the concept's ability to redistribute power and promote power-sharing or its effectiveness as a management method.

Redistribution of Power

According to Bryce Grindle, the concept's surge in popularity is the result of a three-part mandate to redistribute and share power: the attempts of teachers and parents to build a power base, the desire of principals to guard against intrusion into their traditional management prerogatives, and the recognition that a managerial team can quickly galvanize the ranks of administrators in times of crisis. As a solution to intermural alienation and dissension, the method first gained a popular following in the 1960s when teachers engaged in collective bargaining. It continues to quell antagonism in places such as the Hicksville, New York, School District, where, reports Wilber Hawkins, it dispelled "an atmosphere of hostility and distrust" by making "management problems and their resolution ...the concern of all administrators, and not just the superintendent," and by showing that "top management needs the ongoing consultation of middle management and vice versa."

In addition to instilling cooperation among educators, team management techniques can also encourage the formation of power-sharing coalitions. During the 1960s, when teachers associations sought to acquire powers formerly held by boards and administrators, superintendents saw their authority evaporating. "Early in the negotiations game," says Ray Cross, "it became apparent that teachers and superintendents, by the very nature of their respective roles, were on opposite sides of the table."

In response, superintendents "reached out to enlist all of the allies that they could get—particularly principals."

As legislatures passed laws allowing teachers to bargain collectively, state organizations of superintendents began claiming that principals should be considered managers and thus part of the school system's "administrative team." The rapid adoption of team management for purely political purposes subsequently gave the concept a bad image among principals. It is unfortunate, reported Robert Duncan in 1976, that the team management concept can find new life as a reaction to collective negotiations and not as the result of purposeful and rational deliberation by school boards and superintendents. With the right conditions, however, team management can be adopted for, and serve, rational purposes, as the experiences of many school districts during the past decade attest.

Advantages as a Management Method

Team management has proved to be an effective management method. Outlining a program in the Newark, Ohio, school system, William Bainbridge and George Evans claim that team management techniques can give everybody concerned about education, such as students, staff, community members, the P.T.A., and the board of education, a say in identifying and solving problems. Broad-based participation, reports the Ohio School Boards Association, yields improved communication between factions, a higher degree of trust, and higher quality decisions. Educators mention this last advantage repeatedly and with great enthusiasm. L. E. Scarr, noting that the wide variety of training, perspectives, and philosophies that administrators bring to their districts can often complicate the decision-making process, concludes that team management might be "the single most effective way to deal with the problems currently facing public schools."

As a management technique, the team approach promises to coordinate and direct the decision-making process, fostering consensus where none existed before. But what seems ideal in theory can sometimes create as much strife as it is intended to dispel. This is the danger in a society that inspires initiative and ambition, warns Kathleen Hogan:

> Unless the superintendent can exercise a bit of dictatorial supervision—and early on in the infant organization—the system won't work. If. . . the superintendent becomes structurally and morally bound to matrix management [by referring disputing administrators to each other and not to himself,] checks and balances will not exist, and team management may be lost.

Gene Geisert says that "school organizations whose personnel lack a common philosophical commitment will have problems with any management approach." But even where superintendents and boards have attempted to implement team management with honest intentions of sharing power and raising the quality of administration, the system sometimes fails. Because team management has become somewhat of a fad, some school districts have rushed to implement it without fully understanding the concept and without the commitment, trust, and training to make it succeed. The failure of a team—even when implemented with good intentions—can be a disaster for everybody.

Many school districts, however, have successfully used the management team to redistribute power or to increase the efficiency of management. Team techniques have solved problems thought to be insoluble. We will look at three successful teams later in this chapter. First we investigate several elements that determine the effectiveness of a management team.

The Elements of Team Management

As a publication of the American Association of School Administrators notes, some team management approaches "work very well" while "others are merely labels attached to existing hierarchial structures." It is no surprise, then, that there is confusion about what team management really is. No one model fits all school systems. Each district must find a model that responds to its needs, and each must go through a period of examining and modifying the components of that model before it has a workable system.

What follows is an exploration of these models and components, as well as the often-conflicting opinions that accompany them. The first section, "Membership and Organization," describes the kinds of teams that researchers have found most successful. "Power and Trust," the second section, focuses on the team's creation of a new balance of power and the problems that accompany it. The next section, "The Board-Administrator Agreement," goes into the various ways that a team can define its authority and responsibilities. "Decision-Making," the fourth section, surveys the political remedies for the pitfalls of team management: the potential for becoming disjointed and unsystematic, the tendency to encourage dissension from within, and the problem of participants feeling that their voices carry no weight. Finally, "Evaluating the Team" covers the goals and methods that districts have used to review the effectiveness of team techniques.

These five sections are only brief surveys of the many papers and essays that have recently increased our insight into the techniques of team management. There is neither the time nor the space to discuss the groundbreaking studies such as Rensis Likert's *New Patterns of Management* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1961) and *The Human Organization: Its Management and Value* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967). For more information on specific aspects of team management, check the notes and bibliographies that accompany both older and current publications.

Membership and Organization

Like Shakespeare's Cleopatra, age cannot wither nor custom stale the infinite variety of managerial systems based on team techniques. Mandating membership quotas of anywhere between fifteen and eighty, these systems can be either uncompromisingly informal or highly organized. They can call for meetings that are informational and ritualistic, or productive and goal-oriented. Whatever shape they take, the decision-making process at their hearts needs to respond to the problems and the desires of the district.

Most proponents feel that the management team should include all central office and middle-level administrative personnel, including principals, assistant principals, and supervisors at the building level. In small districts, the entire team can work together at regular meetings. But in large districts, says Richard Schmuck, the term *management team* "usually refers to a *class* of administrative personnel including assistant principals, principals, and district-office administrators and not to a functioning *team*."

In larger districts, the total team must be divided into interlocking subgroups capable of getting useful work done; the larger group may or may not meet together as a "total team." What the total management teams in these districts resemble, then, is legislative bodies (though they rarely take votes), which assign the actual work to committees. We will see this strategy at work when, in the second half of this chapter, we look at three successful teams.

The best source for ideas on team organization is descriptions of successful team management systems. Another source is general team models, which have been proposed by a few writers.

Citing a desire to limit the number of team members in each working group from five to ten, Kenneth Erickson and Walter Gmelch describe three models that may be combined into a system of interlocking management teams. The "conventional" model includes three levels of administrators: a "policy team" that includes board of education members and the superintendent; a "central management team" composed of the superintendent, representatives of the central office and staff, and all principals; and local teams that report to special area administrators, such as the business manager, the curriculum director, or the school principal. In large districts, principals are also members of other "interlocking" teams from their geographical areas.

The second or "cross-bred" model features two teams: a policy team simiiar to that of the conventional model and a management team responsible for planning, developing concepts, evaluating programs, and making recommendations to the policy team. This arrangement does away with the typical superintendent's "cabinet," replacing it with representatives of various special groups, such as teachers, classified personnel, principals, special education instructors, and community support groups.

The final or "cocoon" model again includes the policy team and management teams of the "cross-bred" model. But instead of having permanent representatives of specialized groups, the "cocoon" model adds teams of specially qualified people studying specific problems. These single-purpose cocoons (or ad hoc teams), which present alternatives and make recommendations to the management team, disband once their assignment is complete.

Meetings of the team may take place at a central site, or they may be rotated among all the district's schools. At one school district described by Mark Anderson, the team consists of a superintendent's cabinet (including central office administrators, the superintendent, and a principal representative) and principals (divided into three subcouncils for the elementary, middle, and high school levels). The superintendent's cabinet meets weekly, but it also attends the principals' subcouncil meetings, which are rotated among the schools. As the superintendent told Anderson, "holding the meetings in the various schools helps teachers and staff see central office administrators in their buildings and gives us the opportunity to interact face-to-face with people in their own setting."

Power and Trust

In team management systems, the "formal" power structure changes very little. The school board remains the primary policy-making and governing body of the district. The superintendent remains the one person responsible to the board for the district's proper functioning and retains authority for making the final decisions. Principals continue to perform their primary function of managing the local schools.

The changes that do take place in the power structure of team management districts are informal in nature and depend on the willingness of the superintendent and central office administrators to share their powers. Although principal participation may be mandated by district policy, the real extent of principal influence is up to the superintendent, who retains both final power and final responsibility for the team's decisions. Thus—unlike the "brute force" type of power redistributions caused by teacher unionization—changes to team management depend on "enlightened" boards and (especially) on superintendents who make them work.

Most proponents of team management, then, are not promoting a legal transfer of power to building administrators. Rather, they are calling on superintendents to open communications channels from the "bottom" to the "top" of the administrative hierarchy. They are, first and foremost, promoting the adoption of a structure that would enhance building administrator participation in the district's decision-making process.

The Importance of Trust

The success of team management, though, depends on more than a superintendent willing to share power. It also depends in large part on such factors as trust and commitment. Team members must trust the superintendent to respect and implement the team's decisions. Team members must also feel free to disagree with the superintendent without the fear of falling into disfavor. The superintendent, in turn, must have trust and confidence in the team to make intelligent decisions for the district. Each team member must trust that the others are working primarily for the good of the district.

A superintendent interviewed by Mark Anderson said he tries to develop rapport with team members on both a professional and a personal level. It is important, the superintendent said, to "build a good one-to-one relationship with each team member so they know that you are trustworthy, open, and not judgmental." He meets monthly with each team member at the administrator's work site to review goals, discuss building operations, and listen to the administrator's concerns, Anderson reports. The superintendent also schedules yearly team retreats that feature inservice sessions, discussions of district business, and social activities.

Another important factor that has fostered team members' trust in this superintendent, Anderson says, is an open agenda principals' meeting held "prior to the regular bimonthly administrative team meeting." Because of the open agenda, principals can bring their concerns directly to the superintendent before decisions are made at the superintendents' cabinet level.

The Principal's Commitment

Trust and commitment must extend in both directions. As highly visible administrators, principals must support the team's decisions, even those to which they make little actual contribution and over which they had little control. Patricia Wilhelm advises principals not to focus their attention too narrowly on their own schools. Even though a principal may not wish to spend much time on district politics, his or her attempt to influence the course of "decisions is a matter of appropriate self-interest at the very least." Political understanding and maneuvering, frequently a source of frustration, are unavoidable parts of the decision-making process.

Moreover, principals, by demonstrating their political power in the management team, can add to their legitimacy in the eyes of faculty and staff. Principals who can attract district resources and influence policies that improve classroom conditions will, claim Lloyd Duvall and Kenneth Erickson, inspire greater morale and commitment in their teachers than those who cannot. If teachers feel that by working with their principal they are participating in setting district policy, they will truly be supportive of the management team.

In districts where strong adversarial relationships already exist between factions of the administration, team management will likely travel a rocky road and may end up doing more harm than good. This does not necessarily mean, however, that team management and principal bargaining units cannot peacefully coexist, as the management system of Attleboro, Massachusetts, demonstrates (see the section "Examples of Successful Teams").

Like school-based management, team management requires an increased amount of time and effort to make it work. It is always more difficult to make group decisions than it is for a lone administrator to make a command decision. But it is from this investment of extra time and effort that the benefits of team management spring. Thus, successful team management depends on the commitment of all team members to the system and on their willingness to spend the extra time and effort needed for shared decision-making. Yet in the end, states Grindle, "the responsibility to keep communication open belongs to the leader, who has the additional responsibility to demonstrate trust by delegating authority to others in the team."

The Board-Administrator Agreement

Mephistopheles, the agent of Lucifer in Christopher Marlowe's sixteenth-century play *Doctor Faustus*, cannot be sure that Faustus will sell his soul until he signs a written agreement. "But now thou must bequeath [thy soul] solemnly," he tells the Doctor, "And write a deed of gift with thine own blood,/ For that security craves Lucifer."

Four hundred years later, the need to formalize business relationships remains, though contracts tend to be written in blood more metaphorical than literal. Within the team management concept, agreements do not compel, but guide. A crucial factor in implementing a management team, says Lester Anderson in an essay on bargaining procedures, is the adoption of a formal structure that ensures "a system of open communication with all administrators." For school districts adopting the techniques of team management, written policies can lay a sturdy foundation for the concept, setting out both its philosophical principles and the specific details of its government.

Almost all educators who describe the successes of their management teams include some mention of the agreement between the board of education and its administrators. The thread that connects these contracts is the diversity of their subject matter. The agreement endorsed by the Ohio School Boards Association, for example, discusses points such as job descriptions; administrator evaluations, salaries, fringe benefits, and other compensations; and policy impact statements. According to Paul Salmon, an agreement should define the limits of its authority, its rights, and its responsibilities; the manner in which it will account for its actions; and the types of matters that may appear on its agenda. And Wilber Hawkins, writing about the Hicksville, New York, management team, discloses that their agreement calls for the administrators' involvement in budget development, policy formulation, and other management decisions. "One additional feature of the agreement designed to protect administrators from teacher pressure," he notes, is the statement that "all administrative assignments will be made by the superintendent and the board of education."

Hawkins' position recalls another aspect of the board-administrator agreement: its capacity to define the channels of authority, thereby ensuring the team unimpeded sovereignty in governing the district. Because the team approach usually curtails the discretionary powers of administrators, Grindle brings up the possibility of having an attorney on the staff. Under the new system, he writes, "administrators act *under* the law and are not *the* law."

Authorities agree that the finer details of the team's composition, structure, and decision-making processes should not be described in the agreement. According to the AASA, for example, the agreement "should not spell out operational details" but "should address the basic philosophical issues, leaving no doubt of the boards' commitment and the staff's obligations."

While a formal board-administrator agreement may be the best procedure to follow in some districts, numerous successful team management systems lack a written contract. Instead, these districts depend on trust, good faith, and informal understandings among team members. Whether or not a formal agreement exists, however, all team members should clearly understand the team's objectives, organization, and operating procedures. As we shall see in our review of successful teams, a list of unambiguous arrangements has often been the life-blood of an otherwise-doomed management strategy.

Decision-Making

Our forays through layers of structural and administrative concerns bring us finally to the molten core of the team management concept, the process of making decisions. This process determines the team's potential for establishing a consistent response to issues and for fostering an *esprit de corps* among the members. Numerous advantages—many documented by research—are thought to accompany the kind of shared decision-making present in team management systems.

For example, participation in decision-making increases job satisfaction for most (but not necessarily all) employees and gives them a sense of "ownership" in the organization. Decisions made by a group in most cases are likely to be better than decisions made by one person. Collaborative decision-making also increases the coordination of tasks and enhances the general quality of communications in an organization. These advantages and others will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Although middle-echelon administrators are involved in district decision-making in team management systems, they should not necessarily be involved in *every* decision that the district makes. Experts should handle some problems of a technical or legal nature. Routine decisions need not take up the team's attention unless they could significantly alter the district's operations.

The superintendent or a person delegated by a certain administrator could have the power to make some decisions. In the Attelboro team, the superintendent reserves the power to make decisions in special subject areas.

Even if the team is involved in decision-making, the decisions it reaches may not be binding. In almost all cases, the superintendent in team management districts retains the final veto power over team decisions. If the superintendent intends to let the team decision be binding, he or she should clearly communicate that to the team. If the team's role is to be considered advice only, that, too, should be clearly communicated.

Superintendents should be careful in exercising their ultimate power over the decision-making process. If they restrict it too severely or exercise their veto power unwisely, they will destroy the fragile trust that makes the team work. Its members may consider the team a fraud and withdraw their support, seeking other ways to gain influence in the decision-making process.

For these reasons, each member of the team must feel that his or her involvement is genuine and important. Respect for the individual is the keynote of the program described by Bainbridge and Evans. Parents, students, staff members, school board members, and other residents receive a survey each April that solicits suggestions for improvements in the schools. After analyzing the results, the management team develops a four-tiered set of objectives for the year's work. Covering districtwide and local goals, the members' enrichment of their administrative or leadership skills, and their fulfillment of daily tasks and routines, these objectives direct the team's every policy, regulation, and action. Each member of the team receives an individual contract, with the promise of merit pay, based on the four objective areas. The result, observe Bainbridge and Evans, is that "the administrative team expresses a willingness to evaluate its educational program and to report and interpret results openly to the public."

Even though a management team may publicly proclaim harmony and unity, dissension may erupt behind the closed doors of the meeting room. When members return to their own schools, disagreements can slip out between the cracks. James Cole provides an example: "A principal whose job is to convey a team decision to teachers introduces it by saying, 'I don't agree with this, but the superintendent wants us to . . . .'" Cole then suggests nine ways for principals to support the management team, such as keeping the superintendent informed about what people think about the team's decisions and being a "team player." The implication of an "informal" consensus is that all team members agree to abide by the decision of the team. Even though some may have reservations, for the success of the team they must agree not to work against its will.

The Ohio School Boards Association outlines a step-by-step process for preparing, implementing, and evaluating a decision-making policy and also provides sample documents that show how school districts have solved problems associated with contracts, salaries, and fringe benefits. In contrast to this highly structured approach, a system in the Deer Park, Illinois, schools, described by David Cavanaugh and Cynthia Yoder, employs a more flexible and adaptive process for making decisions. A goal of the system is to break down the barriers that consciously and unconsciously inhibit trust and cooperation among team members. Each year Deer Park's management team identifies and devises means for each member to accomplish specific goals and objectives, utilizing his or her particular talents.

In between these two options, the infinite variety of decision-making processes and their administrative structures pose a problem to most administrators: how to choose the one best system. Offering one way to get through the morass of options, Ray Jongeward, an exponent of team management, has published a three-session sequence of workshops. Complete with lecture notes and informational essays, Jongeward's presentation seeks first to introduce the benefits and the drawbacks of team management, then to help school district members "custom design" a management team and to plan and implement an effective evaluation procedure.

Those who initiate a team approach to management would do well to remember the paradox described by Duvall and Erickson. Although the democratic method and team management would seem to go hand-in-hand, these writers observe that the practice of voting on issues generally produces mediocre work and low satisfaction with decisions. It "represents a political rather than problem-solving perspective on issue resolution." More effective are the "Consensus Mode," in which a team wrestles with an issue until every person accepts one solution, and the "Centrist Mode," which has the team providing suggestions and reactions to the one who makes the decision. Following these processes, they add, "does not mean that every person will agree that the proposed course of action is the best," but as Shakespeare says of Cleopatra, they will be able to "make defect perfection."

Evaluating the Team

The universally recognized way to maintain an environment conducive to team management is to establish an evaluation system. In the face of accusations that the team is merely a label attached to the established hierarchical structure, evaluations can promote effective communication and greater trust in both team members and the system itself. As year-end reviews, they can help administrators draw up new objectives, strategies, and performance measures for the coming year. They can also show teachers that their voices have a significant impact in the decision-making process.

These last two uses of the year-end review, as guides to administrators and signs to teachers, appear in the Ohio School Boards Association's methodical process of evaluation and analysis. With the expectation that the review will be used in conjunction with a self-assessment survey administered at the beginning of each school year, Ohio teams are able not only to measure their successes or shortcomings, but also to see whether they are making decisions as a team and realizing the benefits of the team organization. Teams use the "discrepancy approach" to self-assessment, measuring the actual against the expected to reveal future possibilities and potential problems. By identifying discrepancies, they acknowledge a changing environment and purposely ask the question, "Is there a better way?"

Regular evaluations of the team enhance the ability of members to communicate with each other. This skill, say Bainbridge and Evans, is the management team's single most important ingredient: "We believe that the best decisions are made about the schools only when there is communication among all groups so that decisions can be based on as much information and as wide a breadth of expertise as possible." The result is better, more resourceful educational programs.

Examples of Successful Teams

Although the thoughts of organizational theorists are useful for providing general ideas about the structures and functions of management teams, working team management districts can supply the practical advice that organizational theorists miss. We summarize some of this advice in the following pages, as we describe three districts with successful management teams.

After obtaining our information from published sources and telephone interviews, we found that each team is unique in its organization and operation. Yet all have certain features in common, including a superintendent dedicated to the concept, the division of the team into working subgroups, the lack of a written board-administrator agreement, the separation of principal welfare issues from other district decision-making issues, a decision-making process based primarily on consensus, an organizational structure open to input from all members, and an atmosphere of professionalism and trust that permeates the team.

Yakima, Washington

Over a decade after team management techniques substantially reorganized the Yakima School District (1986-87 enrollment about 11,300 students in 24 schools), educators continue to be quite pleased with the system. "Most educational theories are just that—theories," says Larry Petry, the district's assistant superintendent. "We have a management team that works, even though people are always making improvements to it." Born of the need principals felt after being excluded from negotiations with teachers in the mid-1970s, the Yakima managerial team now provides ample opportunity for principals and other administrators to influence the district's decision-making and policy-development processes.

In its organization, the team resembles a legislative body, with many small groups doing most of the work. "The best-qualified people work on problems in their field," Petry explains. "With, say, curriculum people handling only curriculum problems, we don't have unqualified people making decisions, and we don't have anyone who's bored."

Once a group makes its recommendations, the entire team, composed of seventy-two certified and classified managers, reaches a decision by consensus. Votes on issues are rare. The superintendent reserves the right to make the final decision.

The team prepares salary schedules with a formula that ranks them in the middle of twenty-six Washington school districts, half with a larger student population, half with a smaller. By discovering the average salaries of the twenty-six districts, they can compete effectively in hiring the best educators, and they have a basis for adjustments to their present employees' salaries. "We've developed this formula over the last five or six years," says Petry. "It gives us a good defense against charges from the community that we are paying certain educators too much or too little. And it includes the entire team in salary discussions."

Another technique that encourages the team to participate in policymaking is the use of "position papers." According to Warren Starr, the superintendent who founded the Yakima team, a position paper is a formal, three-part statement that anyone can write on any subject. An opening declaration describes the problem and the philosophy behind the proposed solution. The second part details the solution, and the final section proposes a means to evaluate it. For example, one position paper outlines the process of working out agreements on salaries, working conditions, and related issues. A sample paper on administrative hiring is part of Starr's 1978 article in the *NAASP Bulletin*.

After more than a decade, however, the district has standardized its opinions on most subjects that lend themselves to position papers. "There are fewer position papers these days," Petry says, "but we are constantly revising the old ones."

Part of this revision process is a steady dialogue between subgroups of the team and central office managers. Says one observer: "We deal with the board on an informal basis and use position papers to give us guidelines for our total operation."

Yakima's relatively large, somewhat iconoclastic management team employs techniques that keep it flexible and responsive. Its channels of communication are wide open. "If I were to interpret how a management team ought to operate," remarked a former principal and administrative assistant to Yakima's superintendent of schools, "we would be as close to it as anything

I've run into so far."

Rio Linda, California

The Rio Linda Union Elementary School District (1986-87 enrollment about 8,000 with 18 schools) started its move toward team management in 1975, when Nick Floratos began his superintendency. As he and several other members of Rio Linda's management team described in a 1978 article, one of his first actions was to appoint a committee of principals and central office personnel "to develop an organizational structure and process that would allow our district administration to function as a management team." Twelve years later, the team's fundamental guidelines remain basically the same.

The organization of Rio Linda's team resembles that of Yakima, with various small groups doing much of the real work and presenting their suggestions to the larger team. When the entire forty-member team gets together, writes Floratos, there is a chance for the "presentation of concerns, questions, and problems"; "decision making by consensus"; and "dissemination of information and sharing of ideas."

There are three types of smaller groups. The most numerous, "area councils," include the principals, vice principals, coordinators, and psychologists of a specific geographical area. The superintendent, deputy superintendent, directors, area council representatives, and classified management make up the "cabinet." And people representing special interests, such as funded programs and curriculum personnel, form councils that identify problems and propose solutions. The meetings of these groups serve, according to Floratos, as a setting for both inservice training and "the support of individuals."

When a problem arises that needs special attention, the management team appoints a "study committee" to examine the situation and make recommendations. Composed of one representative from each area council and one from the cabinet, study committees deal only with problems "that people are committed to," says Assistant Superintendent of Personnel William Murchison. "Since we've learned to separate problems that affect only our own jobs from those that affect the jobs of others, over the years we've had fewer problems to solve. If you bring up a problem, you'll be sure to be on the committee to solve it, and you might even be its chairman. It's a lot of work."

This process, according to Principal Jay Baumgartner, means that the team never votes on issues. But decisions are not based strictly on consensus either. The team, he says, simply "works toward a solution" until they reach a general agreement. "Every member has a voice in the process," adds Murchison. "The solutions are better in general, and better for managers in particular."

Conflicts—when they do occur—are caused by a breakdown in the team's well-defined decision-making process. "The only time we've had problems was when, for some reason, that process was bypassed," says Baumgartner. "If the process is working as it should, the study committee's report is not really news to anyone."

A similarly informal system guides the handling of salaries and budgetary concerns, Baumgartner explains. "The superintendent asks for input once a year from the area councils regarding building administrators' needs and concerns. Then he comes back to the councils and says, 'Here's what I can live with and what I plan on giving the board. Do you have any problems with this?'"

The superintendent could never have asked that question before team management came to Rio Linda. Baumgartner and other administrators had to meet on their own "because we didn't feel that we were being involved in decision-making. But that group has disbanded since we've gone to the team," and the district now has no union for administrators.

Of course, teachers have a collective bargaining unit, and one of the management team's most important tasks is to define the district's relationship with the bargaining unit. The team's negotiating group includes a psychologist, two principals, the director of personnel, and the assistant supervisor of maintenance and operations.

When the bargaining unit makes a proposal, the board of education and the district's legal counsel review it first, and then pass it to the area councils. They, in turn, bring up specific concerns to the entire management team. Finally, the negotiations team develops counterproposals, which, after the board reviews them, are presented to the teachers. Following each negotiations session, each member of the management team receives a written summary of the proposals, counterproposals, and decisions.

Once both groups reach an agreement, the negotiations group "provides each member of the staff with a written interpretation of each article to help further clarify the meaning of the terms of the contract," writes Floratos and his colleagues. The group also provides inservice training on contract management and grievance processing. "The end result of this process is a contract which has been developed and reviewed by all the management team."

Such well-established channels of communications are, says Murchison, an essential part of the managerial system. Administrators continually ask for the reactions of both individuals and the various subgroups to the decision-making process, and answers receive weighted numbers that help to prioritize future decisions. While some people might feel that the most important result of better communication is better decisions, Murchison believes that it is the atmosphere of greater trust. "We can solve problems more quickly and in more detail," he says. "But even more importantly, the largest group of people, principals, understand our decisions better now."

Another key to the success of team management at Rio Linda is support from the school board. "The importance of an supportive board cannot be overestimated as an imperative in the building of a management team," Floratos stresses. The board must be actively interested in the district's staff and must consistently support the team's decisions.

Both Murchison and Baumgartner acknowledge that the team management system requires extra time and effort from each of its members. Principals comfortable just to follow orders may be discouraged by such a process. But that species is unknown at Rio Linda. As Baumgartner concludes, "I could not name one principal in this district who is truly dissatisfied with the system."

Attleboro, Massachusetts

On the surface, the team management system of the Attleboro School Department (1986-87 enrollment 5,500 students in 9 schools) seems to resemble that of Rio Linda. The districts are about the same size and follow about the same rationale in dividing the larger team into small, issue-oriented groups. But that is where the similarities end. Whereas administrators in Rio Linda value their well-defined avenues of communication, Attleboro's management team has succeeded because of what Curriculum Coordinator Ted Thibodeau calls their "low-key" approach. With a roster of only twenty-five members, the team has deliberately cultivated an atmosphere that emphasizes open discussion over process. "It has become," says Thibodeau, "a way of operating."

The team was founded by Robert Coelho in 1969, the year he became superintendent. He had worked in the department for fourteen years as a teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent and had had the opportunity, as he wrote in a 1975 essay, "to observe the system's growth mechanisms" and to formulate some plans for changing its organization.

With two other members of the central administration, Coelho "analyzed the organization's planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling, and evaluating processes against the system's human abilities to communicate, make decisions, and solve problems." Coelho and other members of the "central office team" read widely about organizational development, "organic models of organization," and related topics, and they enrolled in courses on human relations, organizational analysis, and decision-making.

Then the team sought "the expertise and use of outside consultants," which was "probably the most strategically advantageous decision by the central team during its early stage of development." The consultants held a series of training seminars on group dynamics, team development, and related topics for building administrators and the central office team.

Coelho emphasizes the importance of this kind of training in developing a climate that encourages new ways of thinking. Training strategies "must aim at changing the entire system, not merely one part of it," he writes. Unless "the culture of the system" is changed to "allow for new ideas and technologies to be introduced and examined, the people and their problems will still exist: the same communication blockages will persist and the same clinging to staid, security-bound values will tend to keep the system" from becoming the adaptive organization it needs to be.

Coelho's ideas and efforts have grown into a team composed of six subgroups: five councils and a central office team of the superintendent and his assistants. There is one council—made up of principals, assistant principals, and building administrators—for each of the traditional groupings of grades: K-4, 5-7, 8-12, K-8, and K-12. Every week the central office team meets with one of the councils, while the other four meet by themselves or with each other, as needed. The organizational plan, according to Ted Thibodeau, is "still a success."

Teams conduct their meetings in the same manner. A chairman assembles and organizes the members, a "process observer" attends to the way that they are interacting, and a "recorder" writes out the transactions on an easel so that all may see. Members share these duties to encourage participation and to emphasize the meetings' democratic nature.

Although decisions are made by consensus, the superintendent retains the final authority for them. As Coelho explains, the superintendent "has to answer to the board as the chief executive." Claiming the need for a systemwide view of special subject areas—such as guidance, physical education, art, music, and athletics—Coelho also reserves the right to make unilateral decisions about these areas.

The management team at Attelboro coexists with a principals' bargaining unit, which has existed since the 1960s. At the time of the team's founding, there was no friction between the principals and the central office, and today the relationship is still quite positive. Observers attribute the harmony to the principals' professional attitudes and their desire to deal separately with the issues of working conditions and decision-making.

Choosing not to bargain directly with the principals' group, Coelho leaves this responsibility to other central office administrators. No salary or working condition issues have ever come up at regular team meetings, even though members can place any item on the agenda.

Another sign of the Attleboro team's cohesiveness is that it has never needed a formal agreement between administrators and the board of education. "We never got into the policy statement as a method of operation," Coelho remarks. During the budget cuts of the 1981-82 school year, brought on by the property tax limitation measure known as "Proposition 2 1/2," a tacit professional agreement among Attleboro's educators helped the team work out problems together. It was a "good faith effort of all of us working together to develop the system," observes Coelho.

Conclusion

For decades, reform-minded educators have promoted shared school district management as an alternative to the traditional hierarchical arrangement of district governance. In a few scattered districts, shared management has been a reality for many years, usually due to the leadership of a superintendent who is convinced of the merits of shared decision-making.

In team management systems, the superintendent continues to be the one person responsible to the board for the team's decisions and also retains final authority in decision-making. Thus, team management is highly dependent on a superintendent who is honestly interested in sharing decision-making power with middle-echelon administrators.

Beyond these few observations lies territory that, although often mapped, looks different to each new traveller. We have seen many differences in this chapter, not only between theories but between theories and practice as well. Perhaps the main truth that we can glean from the studies and explanations that appear here is that a team can succeed only if its members trust one another. Unfortunately, it takes a long time for that kind of trust to develop, and a school district needs specific plans and strategies to cope with the wide variety of problems that require its employees' immediate attention.

Each of the three districts we have surveyed has a special strategy that nourishes such trust. Yakima has its participative innovation, Rio Linda its highly structured channels of communication, and Attleboro its climate that encourages team thinking and cohesiveness. Other districts no doubt have other ways of supporting the team concept. The strong superintendent who possesses sophisticated organizational skills is one frequently cited example.

The design of the team management system is another important factor in its success. As Lester Anderson states, the extent to which the concept is implemented depends on the skill with which the superintendent and his or her staff design a structure that ensures "a process of open communications among all administrators in the decision-making process." Successful implementation may thus require substantial training of team members in the communications skills required for shared decision-making, a topic addressed more fully in chapter 11.

Beyond all these strategies, however, lies the need for trust and, allied with it, the freedom to depend upon one's intuition. A leader's skillful use of intuitive insights can make a management technique obsolete, or it can lead him or her to implement one that has never been tried. Team members can understand problems more thoroughly if they can intuit the responses of other people to their plans. And the person who wants to experiment with team techniques, even after perusing all the research and all the descriptions of successful teams, must trust his or her coworkers and depend upon his intuition until, together, they discover a system that works for them.

Chapter 7

Participative Decision-Making

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In recent decades, a reform movement has been building momentum both in public education and in other sectors of society, notably business. This reform movement can be seen as a broad attempt to make organizations more "democratic" and less authoritarian in their operation. A cornerstone of this reform movement is participative decision-making (PDM).

PDM is an ambiguous term at best and can refer to a variety of decision-making arrangements. In chapter 2, the notion of a continuum of leadership styles was introduced, with the authoritative and "boss-centered" model at one end of the continuum and the democratic and "subordinate-centered" model on the other. In general, the leadership behaviors and systems that utilize PDM are situated toward the democratic end of the spectrum.

The school leader can exercise PDM in a number of ways. He or she may consult with subordinates before making a decision or allow a group to make decisions via consensus or majority vote. If a group makes the decision, the leader can act as an "equal" with no special authority, or the leader can retain the final "veto" power for decisions. As indicated by the programs described later in this chapter, the effective leader uses a variety of decision-making styles, including, at times, an autocratic style.

PDM is an essential feature of both team management and school-based management, discussed in the previous two chapters. Indeed, PDM is the central element of the management team—its *raison d'etre*. In school-based management, decentralization of decision-making authority to the school site is the central theme, but PDM at the school site is also essential to the system's proper function.

The Rationale for Participation

PDM systems do not involve significant alterations of the formal and legal power structure of school governance. The person in charge—whether it be the superintendent or principal—retains both authority and responsibility for the decisions made through the participative process. Thus, decision-making authority in PDM systems is *voluntarily* shared with those in traditionally subordinate positions. The responsibility for the decisions, however, cannot be dispersed concomitantly. Thus, PDM is often referred to as a "high risk" undertaking for the administrator involved.

There are three good reasons, though, for believing that this risk is worth taking. First, PDM has been shown to have numerous advantages over traditional, authority-based systems of command, including better decisions, higher employee satisfaction, and better relationships between management and staff. These advantages and some of the research confirming them are discussed later in this chapter.

Second, the "democratic" reform movement referred to earlier has not subsided and is not likely to in the near future. Teachers, parents, and other community members are clamoring for a piece of the decision-making pie. The rights of citizens and teachers to participate in school governance are being written into state laws and collective bargaining agreements.

The writing is on the wall: If school administrators do not voluntarily share their power, they risk the forced rearrangement of decision-making authority through political means. PDM offers educational administrators the opportunity to voluntarily share their power with subordinates and the clients of the school system, allowing the best of both worlds: professional control of the schools and access to the huge potential for improved education that participative management provides.

The third reason the "risk" of PDM is worth taking is that it can prevent the development of adversarial relationships between administrators and teachers. In 1985, Gladys Johnston and Vito Germinario surveyed 450 teachers in New Jersey to study the relationship between teachers' involvement in decisions and their loyalty to school administrators.

The concept of teachers' loyalty to their principal was made the focus of the study because of its understated importance in the hierarchical structure of school governance. According to Johnston and Germinario, "principals who have solely the power of their office can be assured of gaining only the minimal compliance from their teachers."

The researchers concluded that teachers who received a balanced amount of participation were "significantly more loyal to the principal than those characterized as saturated or deprived" of involvement. If principals want to have a more loyal staff, Johnston and Germinario advise them to increase gradually the participation of the 87 percent of the teachers who reported being "deprived" of involvement.

A 1979 study of Montana educators, reported by James Keef, found that much of the discontent and "restlessness" of teachers stems not from low pay but from a lack of involvement in decision-making. According to Keef, the main objectives of teachers are to "have some control over their jobs and profession, and to be professionally consulted on matters that affect children in their classrooms."

When teachers are denied a role in decisions at their schools, collective bargaining through their unions is the only avenue left for voicing their opinions, warns Carl Marburger. Unfortunately, such bargaining takes place with *district* administrators, and the negotiations focus on money and fringe benefits. The principal and other building administrators who could provide the participation the teachers seek are cut out of the process.

If building-site administrators are afraid to share decision-making authority, numerous studies have found no legitimate basis for this fear. According to research reviewed by James Lipham, "teachers do not wish to usurp the role of administrators to make final decisions. In fact, participative decision-making in schools still is seen [by teachers] as rightfully occurring within an authoritarian organizational context."

Dan Riley found that teachers would like to be involved in a "shared or joint decision-making process," and they "expressed a desire, not to make decisions, but rather to influence or make recommendations." PDM offers administrators an avenue to accommodate such requests.

Of course, just "sharing power" sounds easy enough, yet there are many pitfalls to avoid when implementing PDM. This chapter explores the advantages and risks of PDM, reviews key guidelines for implementation, and describes the experiences of several schools that are currently operating with PDM systems. First of all, however, attention is given to the evolution of the current system of educational governance at the school level and to why many educators advocate a reform of this system.

The Legacy of Educational Governance

From the colonial period until the beginning of the twentieth century, American schools operated with independence that was very similar to constitutional rights of individual states. Citizens formed boards of education that were elected or hired to oversee and plan the organization of community schools. Through consensus decision-making, they determined who would teach, what would be taught, and how the primary goals of the school would be achieved. The operation of local school boards reflected the democratic ideas on which this country was founded.

When American industry early in this century rapidly increased productivity by adopting scientific management principles, school administrators began to adopt similar principles in the schools. As Robert Feir points out, the efficiency of standardization increased educational achievement, but its simplicity disregarded the needs and potential of individual teachers. American industry has long since modified or discontinued the regimen of scientific management, but the educational system has been much slower to change. Although schools have moved away from the concept, "residual centralization, bureaucratic structure, and predetermined distinctions between teaching and administrative roles have remained pretty much intact, despite the growth of unions," states Feir.

According to Cliff Eagleton, 1930 could be considered "the high point of decentralized public education in American democracy." At that time, our schools "were highly decentralized units, simple in organizational design and controlled by local citizens as part of their ordinary lives." All this was to change, however, with the reform movement known as the "consolidation of schools." Between 1930 and 1950, Eagleton states, "school population increased from 28,000,000 to 46,000,000 pupils, yet the number of school districts decreased over 400%." In 1980, nearly half of all public school children were enrolled in "gargantuan administrative organizations of over 10,000 students."

Districts have expanded geometrically in size and complexity, and administrators and board members now need to possess "expertise in curriculum, finance, policy-making, union negotiations, the nature of the bureaucracy, and so on," says Eagleton. A skill now required of teachers is the ability to work optimally within the bureaucracy and its restraints. Worse still, schools and teachers are now becoming centrally responsible for the "social, emotional, physiological, and moral development of each generation," domains traditionally assigned to the home, the courts, and other institutions.

Inside schools, the structures of authority developed by past generations of education are being reevaluated. A 1983 study by Phillip Schlechty and Victor Vance focused on historical influences on the shape of the teaching force toward determining how the future teaching force could be improved. Between 1950 and 1970, they state, the "postwar baby boom" necessitated a major increase in the size of the teaching population. The tendency "to view teachers as workers and administrators as managers was encouraged by the perception that many of those the schools were compelled to hire were underqualified or unqualified." From a stereotypical viewpoint, "a few good men" were needed in the school's office to "manage the activities of women who were perceived to be well-meaning though technically and intellectually less than outstanding."

In contrast, the advanced education of today's teachers makes them the most qualified educators in our nation's history. Their place in the authority structure of many schools, however, remains as subservient and detached as decades ago. It is time to realize, Schlechty and Vance state, that the students are the workers in the classroom, and the teacher is "a first-line supervisor as opposed to a low-level employee."

Advantages of Participation

One of the fundamental arguments for PDM is that it is the method of school governance most consistent with democratic principles. The belief that those affected by public institutions should have some voice in how they are run is deeply rooted in America's laws and traditions. Making the governance of schools more participative is an expression of belief in the democratic system and is a useful means of teaching both students and educators the principles of the democratic process.

Eagleton takes this concept one step further by suggesting that the treatment of students as "clients" or "outsiders" encourages apathy about personal achievement and self-control, both during and after school. By allowing students a voice in the organization and operation of their schools, our education system can reflect our democratic system. Most importantly, Eagleton states, such a system would help students to realize "the advantages and responsibilities of freedom."

Participative decision-making can also improve in more specific ways, say proponents, by promoting both better decisions and their more effective implementation. Broader participation increases the number of viewpoints and interests that are expressed and considered while a decision is being made, and this, in turn, may produce better decisions. PDM also improves communication within a school by providing new channels for the exchange of information and ideas, particularly for the "upward" movement of information from the bottom to the top of the administrative hierarchy. Finally, PDM can lead to better decisions and increased efficiency because it allows a school to make fuller use of its human resources, particularly the expertise and problem-solving skills of its teachers.

Since the distance between where a decision is made and where it is put into practice is reduced, PDM can allow the implementation of new ideas and reforms to take place with greater efficiency. If persons implementing policy have participated in the development of that policy, they are more likely to understand it better. In addition, they are more likely to have a greater sense of "ownership" in the decision and thus will feel more committed to its successful implementation.

Finally, evidence suggests that PDM can improve employee satisfaction and school climate. For example, the fact that teachers are consulted about decisions shows them that the school values their opinions; they, in turn, develop greater feelings of professional pride and job satisfaction. Adversarial relationships between administrators and teachers are less likely. With better communications and more satisfied personnel, the school's overall "climate" (discussed in the next chapter) can be significantly improved.

Quality of Decisions

Many of the above advantages of PDM have been confirmed either directly or indirectly by research. Donald Piper, for example, compared the quality of decisions made by individuals acting alone with those they made acting in groups. He first gave each individual subject a test that required making a series of decisions. Whereas members of a control group simply retook the test individually, the remaining subjects were divided into three types of groups for retesting. One type (consensus) had no leaders; group members discussed the problems until they reached solutions that were accepted—though not necessarily agreed upon—by everyone in the group. In the second type of group (participative-best), the individual who had scored highest on the test was chosen group leader and given the responsibility for making decisions after eliciting advice from the rest of the group. The third type (participative-worst) worked the same way, except that individuals with the lowest scores were designated as leaders.

The results of the testing strongly favored group decisions. Whereas the individuals who retook the test actually scored slightly worse on a second try, each type of group did much better than the average of its members' initial scores. The consensus group decisions were better than the individual averages, and several groups actually outperformed even their best individuals. In each participative-best group, the leaders made better decisions with help than they had made acting alone. The decisions of the participative-worst leaders improved dramatically, though only one such group was able to surpass its best individual.

Although the exercise used for this test was not related to education, its results are significant because they form such a consistent pattern. All the leaders—good test-takers and bad—gained from the participation of others, and in no case did listening to the advice of others cause a leader to make decisions that were less correct. Thus, as Piper suggests, the results indicate that "if arriving at the most correct decision is the primary goal, the involvement of several people . . . will provide better results that the 'one-man-deciding alone' model."

Organizational Effectiveness

As noted earlier, the management structures of school systems often reflect the structures used in industry. To compete in the current world economy, American industry is searching for ways to increase productivity and quality. Several innovations in management have been gleaned from the Japanese.

With some irony, it is often said that the "secret" of Japanese management structures was provided by the teams of efficiency experts and group process specialists sent to Japan by General Douglas MacArthur after the second world war. To some extent this is true, but according to David Hawley, the most important step taken by the Japanese occurred in 1961 when "they took the control of quality out of the hands of central management and made their efficiency experts consultants to work groups." The responsibility and rewards of quality production began to center on the workers, where the creation of quality had always taken place.

One of the Japanese innovations now being transplanted directly into American businesses is the quality circle. A quality circle is usually composed of eight to twelve members who meet weekly to solve problems that concern employees. The members who volunteer to be in the circle often have specific experience with the problems to be solved, and the company provides time, specialized training, and materials for the meetings. Once organized, the group selects a problem to address, collects and organizes data concerning the causes of the problem, and then discusses possible solutions using the information. When a resolution of ideas is complete, the members present their recommendations in a formal meeting with administrators.

Shaker Zahra and his colleagues report that 1,000 U.S. companies—including 200 on the Fortune 500 list—are using quality circles. In each instance, the small investment of developing the groups is considered well worth the potential to "enhance the quality of working life, utilize employee creativity, improve communication between workers and management at all levels, and improve morale."

Quality circles can be just as effective in schools, fulfilling the unquestioned desire for participative decision-making. Later in this chapter we will review the stages of implementing quality circles and look at examples of programs currently operating in schools.

Teacher Satisfaction

Several studies have sought to determine how teachers feel about involvement in decision-making. Joseph Alutto and James Belasco, for example, did pioneering work on the relationship between level of participation and teacher satisfaction. Comparing teachers' actual and desired levels of participation in decision-making, they identified three different conditions: deprivation (too little involvement), saturation (too much involvement—research indicates this is a relatively rare phenomenon), and equilibrium (neither too much nor too little involvement). Test results indicated that teachers in a state of equilibrium were the most satisfied group. Teachers who experienced either deprivation or saturation were less satisfied. Thus, it may be more important to offer a teacher the right amount of participation than it is simply to increase participation.

Important as it is, Alutto and Belasco's work is limited by its exclusive focus on the amount—rather than the type—of participation offered to teachers. Other research has considered whether teachers are more interested in certain types of involvement than others. In 1984, Dan Riley surveyed 750 teachers to determine which avenues of participatory decision-making are preferred. The study was designed to determine the actual and desired amount of participation in decision-making at the classroom level, building level, and district level. Riley's findings indicated, consistently with other research, that "teachers experience significantly greater involvement at the classroom level than at the building and district levels." At all organizational levels, however, respondents reported the desire to have "significantly greater participation." The results indicated that "the more actual participation experienced, the more that is desired," but the involvement focuses on influencing decision-making, rather than "making the decisions."

Further evidence that teachers desire a greater decision-making role in certain areas than in others is provided by the work of Robert Knoop and Robert O'Reilly. They asked 192 teachers how they felt decisions should be made about textbook selection, curriculum planning, and curriculum evaluation. While most teachers felt they should have sole responsibility for selecting textbooks, in other areas teachers did not want sole responsibility, nor did they want to give principals total responsibility. Instead, most favored some sort of shared decision-making, either through majority rule or a system of "consultation" in which the principal makes the decision with a lot of input from teachers.

Taken together, the above studies constitute a strong endorsement for participative decision-making. They show that PDM can enhance the quality of decisions, increase employees' job satisfaction, prevent adversarial relationships, and, in general, improve the school's climate.

The primary disadvantage of the participative approach is that it requires more time and effort on everyone's part to make it work. Although it often slows down the efficiency of the decision-making process, the advantages accrued through PDM appear to easily outweigh the disadvantages.

Guidelines for Implementation

Many building administrators are convinced of the desirability of PDM at the school site, yet they are not sure how to proceed. How should the organizational structures for involvement be designed? Who should be included in the decision-making process? What kinds of decisions should be shared with others? How should agreements be reached?

Of course, there are no pat answers to these questions. Each school is unique and has different needs, resources, and restrictions that will influence the final form of its PDM system. There are, however, several basic guidelines that should be considered before setting up any shared decision-making system.

The Role of the Principal

Although PDM has many advantages over autocratic decision-making, it does not necessarily follow that all decisions should be made collectively. In some instances—such as when a crisis arises, when decisions are routine, or when special expertise is called for—an autocratic style may be best.

The task facing the school leader involves maximizing several variables—the efficiency of decision-making, the quality of decisions, the use of professional expertise, and the satisfaction of those affected by the decisions made—each of which may be at odds with the others. Simply increasing participation in decision-making without considering the other variables could ultimately be counterproductive. As management consultant Maneck Wadia states,

> Participative management is but one tool in the management bag. An executive proclaiming to be a "participative manager" is tantamount to a carpenter proclaiming to be a "hammerer." Obviously, a carpenter has and needs a variety of tools in achieving objectives. Similarly, a manager needs a variety of techniques to achieve goals.

Instead of sharing all decisions, the astute school leader will make some decisions autocratically, will make some with input from the staff, and will allow the staff to make some decisions themselves. In short, the effective building administrator will utilize a "situational" style of leadership and will vary his or her decision-making style with the needs of the situation.

Safeguarding the Principal's Authority

When PDM is implemented districtwide, care must be taken to preserve the principal's role as an active instructional leader. In one district that involved staff members on curriculum councils, the roles of administrators and staff members were not carefully defined, with the result that, in many of the district's schools, a vague sense of "collective leadership" eroded principals' authority. Teachers erroneously believed the curriculum council had the final voice in some matters that state law or district policy assigned to the school board or to administrators. Also, principals tended to back away from hard decisions on staff evaluation, assignment, or scheduling. To resolve these problems, the district more carefully defined the purpose and procedures of the curriculum councils and reemphasized the principals' roles as educational leaders.

The Principal's Involvement of Teachers

After synthesizing the data of two recent studies, Judith Dawson identified three contextual factors that the principal can influence to increase teacher motivation and participation during a shift to PDM. The first factor involves the "availability of time and other resources." The research indicated that the use of teachers' noninstructional time had several disadvantages. Meetings are brief, and participants usually feel rushed or tired and cannot concentrate on planning. Dawson recommends that at least some nondiscretionary time—time usually used for classroom teaching or other meetings—be allocated for participatory decision-making so that teachers' work schedules will not be overloaded.

The "local concerns and priorities" of teachers is the second contextual factor. Put simply, teachers respond with greater motivation when the problems they address involve local concerns that they believe are important. If their task involves a secondary priority or an innovation that does not concern them, teachers are not likely to volunteer time or submit to the demands of involvement. It is the principal's responsibility, states Dawson, "to increase the extent to which a program addresses important issues" by being aware of teachers' interests and redirecting programs if new issues of importance arise.

The third factor involves "staff perceptions of administrative commitment to change." Studies indicate that "some principals build reputations of frequently adopting innovations but failing to continue to provide support for them." When this occurs, teachers openly admit their reticence to commit themselves to a new program. Dawson notes, however, that the same teachers "are often surprisingly willing to suspend their skepticism." The best recourse, as always, is to back words with action. The allocation of nondiscretionary time and a small amount of money for resources is the best evidence to give of the school's dedication to a new program. Simple arrangements, including logical meeting times, reserved rooms, and typed agendas and program materials, can also make a difference.

Who Will Be Involved and How?

The long-term success of a given PDM system is often determined by the amount of research and time invested during its planning and development. To develop an effective system, the school administrator must first determine who will be involved and state the extent, area, and form of their involvement.

In the selection of participants, the "classic rule of thumb," as Robert Muccigrosso states, is "to involve all those in the decision-making who will be directly and significantly affected by the outcome of the decision." Although this general rule seems sensible enough, it is complicated by several considerations.

First, different individuals desire different levels of involvement. Some faculty members might desire a great deal of participation, whereas others may prefer to be told what to do. Thus, the first step in implementing a PDM program would be to determine who has an active desire to be more involved in decision-making. An ideal program would be selective and voluntary, offering participation to those who want it, without forcing it on those who do not.

Involvement in the decision-making process should also be dictated by the situation. "Total group decision making continues to be overutilized in schools," says James Lipham. "In the early stages of any change process, when awareness and support are critical, wide participation should be the rule. In later stages (i.e. implementation), participation should be limited because people weary of group meetings devoted to redeciding issues."

Another complication of involving all those affected by a decision is that some individuals may have special expertise in certain areas that gives them a special status in the decision-making process. This is the classic dilemma between "professionalism" and "populism" in a democratic system. A solution to this problem has never been found and probably never will be.

Nonetheless, the input of others should always be sought and heard. It is the principal's responsibility to decide in each case whether following the advice of an "expert" (who may be the principal himself) or consenting to the desires of the larger group will be most beneficial to the school. In any case, the principal must make clear to the staff members what their role in the decision-making process will be before the process begins. Another problem with the "classic rule of thumb" for involvement is that the decision-making group can quickly become too large and cumbersome for efficient operation. Thus, some form of representation may be called for.

This raises the question of the fair selection of participants on decision-making and advisory committees. Marburger, addressing this issue in a study of school-based management councils, presents four alternatives: appointment by the principal, appointment by department heads or the faculty council, self-selection by voluntary appointment, or election by the faculty. Marburger recommends the last two alternatives since direct appointment may result in committees that are not representative and raise claims of favoritism. Self-selection and appointment can produce councils with appropriate knowledge and motivation to effect change. Election by the faculty can ensure representative councils, as long as ability is the criterion for selection and not popularity.

Administrators may best determine the extent of involvement desired by teachers and staff through direct communication. As discussed in the last section, research has shown that teachers who feel they have too little or too much involvement are less satisfied than teachers who perceive their participation as appropriate.

According to Lipham, "excessive involvement causes frustration ('Why doesn't the principal just decide and leave us alone?'), whereas underinvolvement creates hard feelings ('Why wasn't I consulted?')." The sensitive principal, Lipham concludes, must give attention to both the frequency and the level of involvement and should strive for "a condition of equilibrium" between too little and too much involvement.

In a similar vein, the areas in which participation in decision-making is offered should be those of most concern to teachers. As noted earlier, teachers are more interested in areas that are more immediate to their work—such as textbook selection, curriculum planning and evaluation, and classroom management—than they are in more general management areas. As Knoop and O'Reilly's research indicates, most teachers desire sole responsibility for the selection of textbooks, whereas in other areas they request only a strong consultative role, with the principal making the final decision.

Of course, different teachers have different areas of primary interest. PDM systems can be designed so that teachers influence the policies that affect them most, without getting involved in other areas. In such systems, teachers who did wish to participate in a certain area would also be likely to be those with the greatest interest and expertise in that area, and therefore, presumably, they would have the greatest potential for contributing to better decision-making.

The limitation of teachers to traditional areas and forms of involvement, however, may underestimate their interests and abilities. The studies of quality circles and Japanese management systems reviewed later in this chapter give examples of how teachers can help increase the efficiency of operations schoolwide, as well as inside their own classrooms.

Moving to PDM

Several writers stress the importance of implementing a PDM system gradually. Jane and Rensis Likert, for example, advise organizations not to "attempt one big jump" from an authoritative to a participative system. In moving toward PDM, they state,

> a leader should make no greater shift at any one time than subordinates or members can adjust to comfortably and respond to positively. If a leader makes a sizable shift, the members do not have the interaction skills to respond appropriately and usually are made insecure or frightened by the shift, responding to it negatively.

To develop a program that truly fits the needs of a specific school community, PDM should be introduced gradually, allowed to evolve, and evaluated regularly with feedback from participants. As a result of such evaluations, participants may see that they need to improve their own skills and expertise to make the program more effective. A natural next step might be the design of training sessions providing whatever content is needed.

Richard Schmuck and Philip Runkel have collected exercises to help schools and school groups assess their decision-making structures and learn more about how participative decision-making works. The "Card Discovery Problem," for example, requires participants to find a unique card—something impossible without information-sharing by all members. The "Lost on the Moon" scenario (the exercise used by Donald Piper in the decision-making experiment described previously) teaches participants to reach decisions through consensus by rank ordering equipment most useful for a two-hundred mile trip across the moon. These exercises are helpful because they allow groups to learn techniques of participative decision-making by using it to solve hypothetical problems unlikely to arouse anxiety or strong feeling.

Some of the skills necessary to make PDM work are discussed in detail in the chapters on communicating and leading meetings. Ultimately, the key to a successful PDM program is the development of trust and mutual respect among participants. If these exist, they will foster the open exchange of ideas and feelings that is essential to effective policy-making.

Perhaps the most advanced skills are required for those decision-making strategies that rely on consensus. Angie Garcia lists several guidelines that should be observed by groups trying to reach consensus:

1. Avoid arguing for your own individual judgments. Present your positions as clearly as possible, but listen to other members' reactions and consider the logic before pressing your point.
2. Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the next most acceptable alternative for all. Keep the discussion focused on what you can agree on, even if it is only one small point.
3. Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict. Be suspicious when agreement comes too quickly and easily.
4. Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as majority vote, averaging coin flips, and bargaining. When a dissenting member finally agrees, don't feel that he or she must be rewarded later.

5. Differences of opinion are natural and expected. Disagreements can help the group decision because with a wide range of information there is a greater chance that the group will hit upon more adequate solutions.
6. When you can't seem to get anywhere in a large group, break into smaller groups and try to reach consensus. Then return to the larger group and try again.
7. When one or two members simply can't agree with the group after a reasonable period of time, ask them to deliver a minority report based on their logic.

In the end, no rules or theories can really identify what the most appropriate form of PDM will be in a given situation. But when the formidable human resources of a school community are employed, a school will have little trouble developing a specific approach tailored to the needs, skills, and aspirations of those who are to participate in the decision-making process.

Examples of PDM Programs

There are no "magic formulas" for implementing PDM at the school site. Each school is unique and must design a decision-making structure that will fit its own characteristics and needs.

The guidelines presented in the previous section can help administrators conceptualize the general outlines of their schools' PDM system. Another valuable resource in the design process, presented here, is a description of the experiences of other schools with PDM systems. We present brief descriptions of teacher leadership teams in a high school in Indianapolis, Indiana; the School Improvement Process in Hammond, Indiana; the quality circles program in Oregon City, Oregon; and the Quality of Work Life process in Duluth, Minnesota.

Teacher Leadership Teams

Principal William McColly of the Lawrence North High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, decided to base a school improvement program on basic tenets of Japanese organization after reading *Theory Z* by William Ouchi and *The Art of Japanese Management* by Richard Pascale and Anthony Athos. The four components he derived from his studies involved allowing all people opportunities to make decisions about their professional lives, the establishment of trust from top to bottom in the school, a clearly stated set of principles for every program, and the recognition of continuous improvement as the goal of the school and district.

As part of a Kettering Foundation project, the program began in the early 1980s by developing leadership teams of teachers in the ninth and tenth grades. The teams were developed to discuss and propose solutions to problems in their given areas; assignment to the teams was rotated every nine weeks so that all teachers would be able to take part. The training members received focused on the planning of long-term solutions. Once a problem was designated, an intended outcome that would solve or alleviate the problem was visualized and delineated. Then the needed skills and activities to achieve that outcome were determined and implemented. This objective of "starting at the end" is now being used by teachers in regular class planning.

This type of organization has expanded each year to include the involvement of students and parents in organized committees. McColly reports that the program has resulted in a wide "sense of collegiality developing within our total staff." Teachers are now working on interdepartment projects, expanding the role of the leadership teams. Each year, to increase the training and skills of the new groups, a staff development program is conducted that is "totally planned and presented by members of the staff." McColly considers this one of the finest accomplishments of the program, because teachers are producing "effective staff development programs" on their own.

School Improvement Process

At each of the twenty-five schools in the Hammond, Indiana, school system, a School Improvement Process (SIP) team outlines goals for achieving excellence in the school, designs programs to achieve the goals, and evaluates the programs' success. Because each SIP team has broad authority over what happens in its school, including control over the school's budget, the SIP program combines features of school-based management and participative decision-making.

Patrick O'Rourke, president of the Hammond Teachers Federation, in an interview by *American Educator* (see "Shared Decision-Making at the School Site: Moving toward a Professional Model"), said, "The teams are made up of teachers, administrators, parents, and to a lesser degree, students." Group members are trained in communication and group dynamics. For their problem-solving process, the groups use a modification of the Delphi technique, which, O'Rourke said, "is designed to help people reach consensus on the resolution of a problem by constantly re-examining the nature of the problem."

The basic principle underlying the decision-making process is that decisions should be made by "those who are affected by the decision, those who are closest to it, those who have expertise in the area, those who will be responsible for carrying it out, those who will be living with the decision," O'Rourke said. For example, if an SIP team's proposal affects the entire faculty, everyone would have a voice in the decision. Administrators who serve on SIP teams have no more authority than do the other members in reaching a decision.

Since September 1985, when the SIP program was implemented in all the district's schools, teams have spearheaded significant changes. For example, an elementary school scheduled a ninety-minute block of time for reading activities, another elementary school instituted a junior/senior kindergarten and a transitional first grade, a middle school restructured the school day to allow more time for faculty interaction, a high school started a mentor program, and five school teams have participated in selecting principals for their schools.

Quality Circles

Quality circles, implemented in several schools across the country, usually require a moderate amount of funding and planning time to develop. According to a list compiled by Zahra and his colleagues, commonly used steps for initiating quality circles in schools include appointing a steering committee, selecting a program coordinator, developing an implementation plan, collecting base-line data, choosing a pilot group of circle leaders, introducing the program to all employees, starting initial pilot circles, and then performing an initial program review, expansion, and continuing evaluations.

The Oregon City School District followed these steps in 1983 after receiving funding from the Northwest Area Foundation for a three-year implementation project. The planning resulted in the organization of three pilot quality circles in the Oregon City High School. A language arts circle of nine teachers focused on the problems of excessive classroom interruptions in the school. A math circle of eight teachers reviewed the distribution and loss of textbooks. A secretarial/clerical circle of nine staff members considered ways to improve communication channels with immediate supervisors. New circles were to be developed that would involve additional teachers, secretaries, custodians, parents, and students.

When Hawley described this program in 1984, positive effects of the high school's quality circles were already widely felt. "The enhanced relationship between teachers and administrators is something everyone sees," he noted. Some of the recommendations from the circles have been adopted by the school, resulting in "changes such as fewer classroom interruptions and better control of inventory."

Just as important as the operational improvements of the school, Hawley said, are the "people building." The key is to develop people who can work together to achieve common goals and allow them to attempt even more difficult problems in the future. The new knowledge and skills of the circle members will benefit all of their daily activities and enhance the quality of the district as well.

Quality circles do not alter an organization's authority structure. That is, the management is free to accept or reject a circle's recommendations. In any case, however, management should respond to the ideas and data collected, recognizing their worth and conclusions. Most of the time, the recommendations are accepted because the problem-solving techniques circle members learn to use are simple, sound, and effective.

Quality of Work Life Process

In 1984 the Duluth (Minnesota) Public Schools initiated a Quality of

Work Life process that is the centerpiece of participative management in the district. Developed jointly by the district's top management and leaders of the Duluth Federation of Teachers, the process features a districtwide Steering Committee and thirty-five problem-solving committees that represent building sites or selected programs, according to Elliott Moeser and Leonard Golen.

Each site committee is made up of the school principal or program supervisor, the building steward, and eight to twelve staff members. Participation is voluntary, say Moeser and Golen. The committees prioritize and research issues brought to their attention and then propose solutions, which must be reached by consensus. Final decision-making and implementation of decisions are the responsibility of the administration.

"Meetings of the Quality of Work Life committees are held on work time," say Moeser and Golen. If the meetings cannot be scheduled during the work day, the district awards compensatory time to the participants.

Recognizing that a process involving thirty-six groups requires continual coordination, the district appointed a facilitator to assist the Steering Committee. Among the facilitator's duties are training group members in participative management, encouraging open lines of communication among the units, maintaining records of issues addressed, and making presentations on the process.

Contract issues can be discussed only at the Steering Committee level and then only by agreement of the union, administration, and school board. "In no case does the Quality of Work Life process substitute for negotiations or unit contracts," the authors say. Nevertheless, they point out that "many issues that would have been brought to the bargaining table are solved through dialogue and consensus" in the Quality of Work Life process.

Conclusion

Research and practice have confirmed what proponents of participative approaches have long claimed—that PDM can lead to better decisions, better implementation, greater job satisfaction, and improved school communications.

But simply increasing participation in decision-making is not enough to ensure a smoothly functioning school. As James Lipham stresses, "effective principals recognize the need for situational leadership" and will utilize a variety of decision-making styles according to the dictates of the situation.

When a participative approach is called for, the effective school leader will consider all the variables involved—who should be involved, their optimum level of involvement, what will be decided, and how it will be decided—and then will clearly communicate to the group the design of the decision-making process. When used in this way, PDM can be one of the most effective techniques a leader can use to motivate others to "strive willingly for group goals."

Chapter 8

School Climate

John Lindelow, Jo Ann Mazzarella, James J. Scott, Thomas I. Ellis, Stuart C. Smith

> There is a subtle spirit that exists in a school, both in the minds of the teachers and students and in every act, which may never be exactly described or analyzed, but which even the most inexperienced observer recognizes when he enters a school or a classroom.
>
> L. J. Chamberlin

Ask any student, teacher, or administrator; indeed, ask anyone who has spent even a short amount of time in different schools: each has its own distinct "feel" or "personality" that can be recognized soon after entering its doors.

Some schools are perceived as "good" schools—desirable and perhaps even exciting places to work and learn. Others are perceived as just the opposite—places where one would probably not spend much time were it not for legal or financial compulsions to do so. Still other schools are considered "ordinary" by most observers—not particularly exciting, but not particularly threatening, either.

For decades, this "subtle spirit" of a school was generally called "school morale" by researchers and practitioners. In the past twenty-five years or so, however, it has generally been called "school climate."

Although it is easy to see that each school has its own particular climate, researchers and practitioners have had a difficult time agreeing among themselves as to the exact meaning of the term. Fritz Steele and Stephen Jenks define *school climate* as "what it feels like to spend time in a social system—the weather in that region of social space." Wilbur Brookover and his colleagues conceive of *climate* as "the composite of norms, expectations, and beliefs which characterize the school social system as perceived by members of the social system." Andrew Halpin and Don Croft call *school climate* the organizational "personality" of a school. "'Climate' is to the organization," they state, what "'personality' is to the individual." To James W. Keefe and his colleagues, school climate is "the relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions about the characteristics of an organization and its members."

Two comments by Jean Stockard highlight the problems associated with defining and studying school climate. First, she notes that there are differences among psychological, group, and organizational climate; all too often, "conclusions are made about effects on the aggregate level without adequate controls on the individual level." Second, she notes that students (and we can reasonably extend her comments to include teachers) "within the same classroom and school can have different perceptions of the environment in which they work." Put another way, although everyone in a school works within the same school climate, perceptions about that climate will vary from individual to individual.

Given the wide range of definitions of school climate, we can readily understand Carolyn S. Anderson's comment on the subject:

> The field of climate research in many ways is reminiscent of the seven blind men who gave seven different descriptions of the elephant based on the one part each could touch, and who each claimed to possess the definitive image of an elephant.

Nevertheless, school administrators should not be discouraged by the lack of consensus among researchers and practitioners about what constitutes school climate. At the practical level of initiating school improvements, it is not necessary to arrive at an ideal definition of school climate. Rather, as will be seen in the section on "Improving School Climate" below, it is only important that the administrators and staff at a particular school or in a particular school district determine what matters so far as their own particular needs are concerned.

Of course, it isn't just the school that has its characteristic climate. Both classrooms and school districts also have their "personalities." The climates of the classrooms in a school contribute to that school's overall climate, just as the climates of the various schools in a district contribute to the district's overall climate.

In this chapter discussion centers on climate at the school building level, for two reasons. First, most research to date has focused on this level. Second, the school has a more defined and independent climate than the district or classroom. On the one hand, connections between the individual school and the school district are loose enough so that the district's impact on school climate is necessarily limited. On the other, the individual classroom's ties to the school are tight enough to ensure that overall school climate can profoundly influence the climate of the individual classroom.

Measuring School Climate

Although there is vague agreement among researchers on what constitutes healthy school climate, there is little consensus on how climate should be measured. Several systems for characterizing organizational climate have been devised. Most of these systems focus on measuring patterns of interaction and communication among the school's staff members, particularly between teachers and administrators.

Halpin and Croft's OCDQ

One of the earlier school climate assessment instruments was developed in 1962 by Andrew Halpin and Don Croft. Their "Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire" (OCDQ) focused on "the social interactions that occur between the teachers and the principal." Halpin and Croft recognized "the importance of other components" of school climate, but chose to start with the social component with the hope of dealing "with the others at a future time." Their OCDQ, meanwhile, has become the most commonly used instrument for measuring school climate.

Halpin and Croft examined elementary schools in the development of their OCDQ. They collected data from 71 schools in 6 different regions of the country, with climate descriptions from 1,151 respondents.

The items composing the questionnaire were selected for their ability to indicate consistencies in faculty members' perceptions within their schools and to allow for comparisons among different schools. From teachers' descriptions of their school experiences and from previous research, Halpin and Croft constructed a set of simple statements, such as "Teachers seek special favors from the principal" and "The principal schedules the work for the teachers." Respondents indicated to what extent these statements applied to their schools.

The sixty-four item OCDQ was divided into eight subtests: four tapping the characteristics of the faculty as a group, and four pertaining to characteristics of the principal as a leader. The group behavior subtests were intended to measure *disengagement, hindrance, esprit,* and *intimacy.* The leader behavior subtests were intended to measure *aloofness, production emphasis, thrust,* and *consideration.*

Of these eight characteristics, Halpin and Croft discovered that esprit (teachers' morale) and thrust (the extent to which the principal motivates teachers by setting a good example and personally moving the organization) possessed special significance. Halpin states that the combined OCDQ scores for these two characteristics is "the best single index of authenticity." Authentic behavior, as he conceives it, is reality-centered, open, and essentially honest. Esprit indicated the authenticity of the behavior of a school's teachers as a group, while thrust did the same for the principal's behavior.

Halpin and Croft discovered that the organizational profiles of their seventy-one elementary schools could be arrayed along a continuum from "open climate" (what Halpin and Croft considered to be ideal) at one end through "closed climate" at the other. In the open climate, members experience high esprit but have no need for a high degree of intimacy. The leader scores high on thrust but does not have to emphasize production, since teachers' productivity is already high. The behavior of both the principal and the teachers is "authentic." In contrast, the closed climate is "the least genuine " one. What the principal says and does are two separate things. Teachers are disengaged, esprit is low, and group achievement is minimal.

Halpin and Croft are careful to point out that their continuum, while it is useful for purposes of classification and convenience, has certain shortcomings. As Halpin notes, "the ranking scheme is, at best, only an approximation, and the use of a continuum. . . oversimplifies the facts." He acknowledges that, even though the climate types were predicated on the research, "in a genuine sense, we did not discover these Organizational Climates; we *invented* them."

Researchers have pointed out other limitations of the OCDQ. Kelley suggests that its primary usefulness is in measuring school morale, rather than school climate as a whole. And I. Philip Young and Katherine Kasten point out that the OCDQ focuses exclusively on teachers' perceptions and, consequently, does not yield objective data: "What is measured by the instrument, then, is not a nonobjective school climate, but the objective perceptions that organization members have of the school climate."

Despite its limitations, the OCDQ has its uses. As Anderson points out, "the instrument has had tremendous heuristic value and has promoted a broad-based interest in school climate within elementary and secondary education."

A Revision of the OCDQ

One weakness of the OCDQ, say Wayne Hoy and Sharon Clover, is that it fails to specify meaningful gradations in the climate ratings of schools that fall between the polarities of "open" and "closed." To produce an instrument of superior clarity, Hoy and Clover replaced the eight dimensions of the original OCDQ with only six dimensions—three bearing on the principal's behavior (supportive, directive, or restrictive), and three relating to the behavior of the teachers (collegial, intimate, or disengaged).

In place of Halpin and Croft's bipolar (open-closed) classification, the revised OCDQ illuminates four contrasting types of school climate, based on the relative candor and responsiveness of both principals and teachers: *open* (supportive principals and collegial or intimate teachers), *engaged* (restrictive or directive principals and collegial or intimate teachers), *disengaged* (supportive principals and disengaged teachers), and *closed* (restrictive principals and disengaged teachers).

The authors say a pilot test revealed this schema to be more useful and accurate in characterizing school climates than that of the original OCDQ, since the middle gradations between "open" and "closed" —ambiguous in the original instrument—were clearly associated in Hoy and Clover's revision with perceived patterns of behavior on the part either of the teachers or of the principal.

Other Climate Instruments

Although school climate instruments vary widely in questions asked and in areas of school climate on which they focus, most of them resemble the OCDQ in format. First, researchers decide what particular areas of school climate they want to study. Next they develop a questionnaire designed to yield data on those particular areas. Then they administer the questionnaire to the appropriate parties (depending on what is being studied from what viewpoint, the appropriate parties may be students, teachers, administrators, or any combination thereof).

Typically, the questions are either true/false or multiple choice. In the latter case, respondents are often presented with a statement and asked to respond along a continuum. For example, this statement might be included on a questionnaire addressed to teachers: "The principal is available and able to help when I have a discipline problem with one of my students." Possible answers would range from "always" to "never." When the questionnaires have been completed, the researchers analyze the data and derive conclusions about the climates of the schools studied.

NASSP's School Climate Survey

An example of an assessment instrument designed for use by school personnel is the National Association of Secondary School Principal's School Climate Survey. The instrument is founded on a comprehensive model of the school environment developed by NASSP's Task Force on Effective School Climate. Formed in 1982, the task force sought to develop a set of school climate measures that would have psychometric validation and also be useful to practitioners. The School Climate Survey is one of several instruments in a battery called the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments. Other instruments measure student, teacher, and parent satisfaction.

As described by James W. Keefe and colleagues, this model of the school environment encompasses a wide range of input and output to the process of school improvement. At the broadest level, the model takes into account the larger cultural setting in which education occurs by considering societal ideologies (such as the American "success ethic"). At the district/community level, say the authors, the model measures three areas of influence on school climate: (1) local beliefs, attitudes and values; (2) organizational characteristics (including the physical environment, the formal organization, and the personal relationships and behavioral norms); and (3) characteristics of groups and individuals, including socioeconomic status, racial makeup and location, job performance and satisfaction, and parent and community satisfaction and support.

School climate, then, is conceived of as the mediating variable between these inputs and the outcomes of schooling, which are defined in terms of student satisfaction and productivity. But the relationship among these elements is reciprocal. That is to say, the climate of a school both influences and is shaped by these inputs and outcomes.

Three assumptions are behind this model. First, the quality of a school environment is a longitudinal concern, because deeply ingrained traditions and habits are difficult to change. Second, a consensus about what is and what is not important among the three major school stakeholder groups (students, staff, and community) is an important indicator of a healthy climate. And third, students are the primary concern of the school.

According to the examiner's manual, the School Climate Survey "is normed for use with students in grades 6-12, and for use with teachers, and parent or citizen groups." The manual recommends that all major stakeholder groups, rather than a single group, be assessed, so that the groups' perceptions can be compared. The survey solicits respondents' perceptions on ten subscales: teacher-student relationships, security and maintenance, administration, student academic orientation, student behavioral values, guidance, student-peer relationships, parent and community-school relationships, instructional management, and student activities.

Reviews of Climate Instruments

To help leaders choose among the bewildering array of school climate assessment instruments currently available—many of them with untested psychometric properties, formats, and reporting procedures—several guides review and rate the instruments. For example, Judith Arter is the author of a "consumer's guide" to the major tests and surveys that can be used to assess school and classroom climate. Arter categorizes the instruments selected for review according to the psychosocial and physical characteristics they measure. These characteristic are classified under four general headings: relationships, personal development, system maintenance and change, and physical environment. She also tells how to select a climate assessment instrument and then lists researchers and research projects, books and articles, and training materials.

After this excellent introduction, the main body of the guide consists of an appendix containing the individual reviews of educational climate assessment instruments. These reviews are grouped as follows: (1) classroom climate instruments; (2) school climate instruments; (3) other educational climate instruments; (4) higher education climate instruments; (5) naturalistic, case study, and observational approaches; and (6) classroom interaction analysis. Other appendices provide a summary table of instrument characteristics, a reference list of organizations and climate research reviews, and a checklist for selecting a measure of educational climate.

Having examined school climate assessment instruments from twenty-two school improvement projects around the country, Denise C. Gottfredson and her colleagues present indepth reviews of twenty of the best instruments (in terms of sound psychometric development). Most of the instruments are surveys, but they do include some interview formats. Covering all grade levels, the instruments come mainly from school districts and state departments of education. Review criteria include the school characteristics assessed, ease of use, and the reliability and validity of the various scales included in each assessment instrument.

Gottfredson and her colleagues single out a small group of instruments as having the most promise for yielding reliable and valid measures of important school characteristics. Among assessments relying on teachers and other adult school staff, the authors commend the Connecticut State Department of Education's School Effectiveness Questionnaire and Interview. For schools wishing to assess a broader range of school characteristics, the Organizational Health Description Questionnaire (OHDQ), School Assessment Survey (SAS), Climate Effectiveness Inventory (CEI), and Effective Schools Battery (ESB) are most highly rated, depending on the content desired.

Limitations of Climate Instruments

School climate assessment tools are useful for comparing one school's climate with another's, for measuring changes in a school's climate over time, and for pinpointing areas in which a school's climate needs improvement. Still, they have limitations. For one, they cannot directly measure what is actually going on in the school; rather, they measure the respondents' *perceptions* of what is going on. Although this is not a fatal flaw (virtually every researcher in the field acknowledges that the perceptions of an organization's members about what is happening in that organization are important), it is a factor to be kept in mind when using school climate measurement instruments. To cite another drawback, no analysis of data derived from a school climate measurement instrument can provide the "feel" for what is happening in a school that comes from directly observing students, teachers, and administrators in action.

In short, instruments used to measure school climate can be useful tools for educators and administrators interested in improving a particular school or the schools within a district. For such a tool to be truly effective, however, it must be employed in conjunction with the skilled leader's direct observation of members of the school community as they go about their tasks of administration, teaching, and learning.

The Importance of School Climate

Does it really matter whether a school has a "healthy" climate? Is it worth taking the trouble to try to improve climate? What would be the rewards of such an undertaking?

Certainly the satisfaction and morale of students and staff are higher in schools with healthy climates than in schools with unhealthy ones: indeed, many instruments designed to measure school climate do so indirectly by measuring satisfaction with the school. But is there any hard evidence that climate influences the final outcomes of education—how much and how well children learn? A large body of research on the characteristics of effective schools—briefly reviewed in this section—indicates that it does.

Two of the best known studies are those conducted by Brookover and colleagues and by Rutter and colleagues. Brookover's team studied 91 elementary schools chosen at random from the 2,200 elementary schools in Michigan with fourth- and fifth-grade students. Altogether, 11,466 students, 453 teachers, and 91 principals participated in the study.

From school records and from questionnaires administered to the students, teachers, and principals, the researchers obtained data on "input" into the school system. Data included both demographic variables (such as the socioeconomic status and racial composition of a school's students) and school climate variables (such as students', teachers', and principals' perceptions of their abilities to function successfully within the school). In addition to measuring such "input" into the schools, the study measured certain "outcome variables": the achievement scores of the fourth-grade students on state-administered math and reading tests, measures of the students' self-concepts of academic ability, and measures of students' sense of "self-reliance."

Despite problems posed by high levels of correlation between climate and the economic and racial composition of the student bodies, the authors demonstrated that their climate variables had a stronger influence on achievement than did the racial and economic ones. "Although it is not sufficient proof," they concluded, "these analyses suggest that school climate rather than family background as reflected in student body composition has the more direct impact on achievement."

In another landmark study, a team of researchers led by Michael Rutter followed the progress of a group of children from London's inner city through the first three years after they entered secondary school, comparing behavior and performance at the beginning of the period to those at the end. After allowing for such variables as student socioeconomic status and family background, the researchers still found that students "were more likely to show good behavior and good scholastic attainments if they attended some schools than if they attended others."

Rutter and colleagues suggested that differences in school climate contributed to these differences in student performance. They found that the combined effect on school outcomes of the school process variables they measured was much stronger than the effect of any individual process variable.

> This suggests that the *cumulative* effect of these various social factors was considerably greater than the effect of any of the individual factors on their own. The implication is that the individual actions or measures may combine to create a particular *ethos*, or set of values, attitudes and behaviours which will become characteristic of the school as a whole.

Findings by these two studies have been corroborated by a number of subsequent studies. To cite just a few examples, Judith Warren Little, in her case study of six urban schools (three elementary and three secondary); Peter Coleman, in his study of nine British Columbia elementary schools; and Carol Ann West, in her study of elementary schools in Paterson, New Jersey, all found significant correlations between school climate and student performance. And John E. Roueche and George A. Baker III, analyzing data the U.S. Department of Education collected from thirty-nine award-winning schools from the 1982-83 Secondary School Recognition Program, reached the following conclusion:

> Although the schools differ and, therefore, reflect climate factors in different ways, the data show that these schools have many of the same characteristics reflected in literature on school climate. For instance, a sense of order, purpose, and coherence prevails among the schools—they establish clear academic goals and well-articulated curricula. Furthermore, they are led by strong principals who generally use specific, concrete strategies to emphasize and work toward increased time on academic learning. Finally, in the schools, the principals and faculties recognize and reward student achievement and effort.

Pointing out that the relationships between school climate and school effectiveness are highly complex, Thomas J. Sergiovanni makes the following generalizations:

> 1. School improvement and enhanced school effectiveness will not likely be accomplished on a sustained basis without the presence of a favorable school climate.
> 2. However, favorable school climate alone cannot bring about school improvement and enhanced school effectiveness.
> 3. Favorable school climates can result in more or less effective schooling depending on the quality of educational leadership that exists to channel climate energy in the right directions.
> 4. Favorable school climates combined with quality educational leadership are essential keys to sustain school improvement and enhance school effectiveness. Corollary: Unfavorable school climates hinder school improvement efforts and school effectiveness regardless of the quality of its educational leadership.

Put another way, although a favorable school climate does not *guarantee* school effectiveness, it is a necessary ingredient for such effectiveness. Improving school climate is, then, a worthwhile undertaking.

Improving School Climate

Many principals would like to improve the climates of their schools but do not know how to proceed. They may understand quite well how to elicit changes in particular programs or policies. Yet how can they change something as pervasive and powerful as school climate?

As a first step, principals should gain an understanding of the cyclical and self-perpetuating nature of organizational climate. Then they should consider the process of changing climate and their place in that process. Finally, they might listen to the practical suggestions of researchers and practitioners to gain ideas to apply in their own schools. Each of these steps toward improving school climate is discussed in turn.

The Stability of Climate

Every organization develops norms of behavior that dictate how members of the organization are expected to behave. Each individual learns, through interacting with others in the organization, just what is considered appropriate behavior and what is not. When a person behaves in accordance with the norms, the norms are confirmed and reinforced.

In this cyclical fashion, norms reinforce and perpetuate themselves. And the behavior that the norms dictate is what creates, in the minds of individuals, the organization's climate. Thus, climates, too, are self-perpetuating.

A useful analogy is that of human personality. Each person has a self-image that dictates how that person behaves. Behavior consistent with the self-image reinforces the self-image, which then dictates future behavior.

Habits and patterns of behavior become firmly entrenched in this way and are difficult—though not impossible—to change. Habits of behavior or of thought can be changed, for example, by forcing oneself to behave or think differently for a time, until new patterns become established. The key is to break the self-reinforcing cycle of self-concept and behavior.

Changing organization norms—and the climates they create—is exactly analogous. The change agent must somehow intervene in the self-perpetuating cycle of norms and behavior and establish a new "self-concept" for the school. Once established, the new norms will to a large extent reinforce themselves. The same tendency that makes it difficult to replace a bad school climate with a good one also makes the good school climate, once it is established, tend to perpetuate itself. A useful conceptualization of this stability of a good school environment is provided by Edward Wynne, who studied some 140 schools in the Chicago area. The "good" schools Wynne found were like well-tended gardens:

> In an efficient garden, weeding is easier once the food crops are well rooted. A mature and vigorous crop chokes out the weeds. So too in highly coherent—or good—schools, the vitality of the total environment stifled occasional surges of inefficiency: Students kept peers from breaking rules; teachers went out of their way to help colleagues solve professional problems; things seemed to work out without obvious conflict and stress.

We can take Wynne's analogy a step further. A neglected plot of land doesn't turn into an efficient garden overnight: weeds must be cleaned out, and food crops must be planted and cared for. Months will elapse before the gardener can reap the harvest of his or her labors. Similarly, a negative school climate cannot be suddenly transformed into a positive one, nor can the transformation take place without a lot of hard work.

Can the Principal Make a Difference?

When we consider the self-perpetuating nature of organizational climates and consider further that the principal is a member of the school's organization, it is reasonable to ask whether the principal's power to change a school's climate is greater than the climate's power to change the principal. Some authors have argued in the negative. In their view, a principal's efforts to significantly change school climate can only lead to frustration and defeat.

The idea that principals *do* have the power to change school climate and school effectiveness has a multitude of advocates. Fred Hechinger, who wrote the foreword to a book by James Lipham, is characteristic:

> I have never seen a good school with a poor principal or a poor school with a good principal. I have seen unsuccessful schools turned into successful ones and, regrettably, outstanding schools slide rapidly into decline. In each case, the rise or fall could readily be traced to the quality of the principal.

Whether the principal alone should carry the responsibility for creating an effective school or a healthy climate is open to debate. It is likely, though, that the actual power of the principal to influence the climate of a school lies somewhere between inefficacy and total responsibility. The principal is indeed subject to the norms and other socializing forces of the school; but, as Edgar A. Kelley notes,

> the principal is most responsible for the climate of the school and for the outcomes of productivity and satisfaction attained by students and staff. The simple truth is that others respond, directly or indirectly, to what the principal does as well as to what he does not do.

Kelley concludes that the principal's major role in exercising leadership for climate improvement is "to provide the staff with the information, the expectations, the support, and the supervision so that the staff is able to serve as mediators and transmitters of the principal's expectations." In the process, principals must continuously guard against feelings of complacency or self-validating futility.

Nevertheless, the principal cannot bring about changes in the norms of a school by himself or herself. As will be seen in the next two sections, the principal must enlist the help and support of others both inside and outside the school if he or she is to effect any meaningful changes in the school's climate.

The Process of Change

Of the numerous models that exist for improving a school's climate, we have selected several, grouped under the following headings: organizational development, behavior modification, a program called Reaching Success through Involvement, school climate improvement teams, and other collaborative approaches to improving school climate.

Organizational Development

One promising system for eliciting change in school climate is that of organizational development (OD). "In essence," says D. D. Warrick, "OD changes the norms of an organization." Richard Schmuck and Philip Runkel designed a text on OD in the schools "to help establish the organizational climates that nurture personal fulfillment" in the schools.

OD is basically a strategy for eliciting organizational change that utilizes—at least initially—an outside "cadre" of OD specialists. The specialists educate the members of the organization in such areas as communication skills, problem-solving, conflict resolution, decision-making, and goal identification. They attempt to get the members of the organization "to examine their communication patterns, their customary ways of working together in meetings, or the ways in which people are linked together to get their daily work done." By the time an OD intervention is complete, state Schmuck and Runkel,

> cognitive and affective change should have occurred; norms, roles, influence patterns, and communication networks should have become more receptive and responsive—indeed, the very culture of the school should have become different.

OD appears to be a powerful method for effecting change in organizational climate because it intervenes in the norm-behavior cycle and sets it on a new track. Although OD is best carried out with the help of specialists, many OD techniques and exercises (as found in Schmuck and Runkel's book) can be used without special training.

Gary and Denise Gottfredson describe the use of an organizational development model to improve the climate of an inner-city school. As they wistfully observe, "most educational researchers develop, pilot, and evaluate techniques [for school climate improvement] in schools where it is easiest to conduct their research." But what about schools in serious trouble—inner-city schools plagued by violence, low student and teacher morale, high teacher turnover, and mutual mistrust resulting from (and perpetuating) poor communication among administrators, teachers, and students?

The Gottfredsons chose such a school for a test run of their Program Development Evaluation (PDE) method, an integrated approach (based on OD theory) to analyzing organizational problems and intervening to solve them. In applying the PDE method, researchers collaborate with school personnel to set measurable school improvement objectives, select interventions to achieve these goals, identify obstacles to implementation, and develop benchmarks to monitor progress in coping with these obstacles. According to the authors, PDE surpasses similar school improvement methods in its detailed attention to the obstacles that commonly thwart implementation.

The obstacles that the researchers encountered at this school included a tendency by administrators to cover up problems rather than attempt to solve them, and a consequent lack of teacher trust in the administration's willingness to follow through with its part of any agreement. Researchers also had to cope with a self-validating "yes, but" problem marked by a litany of objections from teachers and administrators alike that the new procedures would be impossible to apply.

The researchers addressed this situation first by reaching agreement among staff and administrators on what practices would be desirable regardless of obstacles. Then, in a separate step, all concerned were called upon to examine the perceived obstacles and develop specific plans to overcome them. The researchers noted that by limiting the range of discussion to a single issue at a time, they were able to keep the "yes, but" problem under control; also, by getting teachers and administrators to collaborate in problem-solving, channels of communication and trust were restored as they collectively developed a set of benchmarks to signal levels of progress. The resulting policies and plans were written down and disseminated throughout the school, along with decisions about who was to take what specific steps, and when.

By the end of the three-year project, teams at this inner-city school had implemented major innovations in classroom management and instruction, had revised schoolwide discipline policies and practices, and had launched several innovations aimed at increasing parent involvement and decreasing student alienation. Although the school still has a long way to go, indicators of teacher morale have risen as the staff's perceptions of the administration have become more positive; meanwhile the school has become measurably safer and more orderly.

Behavior Modification

Another approach to improving school climate utilizes "behavior modification" to break the norm-behavior cycle. Peter Mortimore describes this approach in an interview in *Educational Leadership* (see "On School Effectiveness. . .").

Mortimore uses an example of a school in which the norm is for students to tear down student paperwork that is displayed on the walls. Mortimore emphasizes that changing such a norm would take time. If teachers wished to have work displayed on the walls, that would be a new departure, and students wouldn't be used to it. The teachers "would have to prepare the students beforehand, and they should expect some failure at first."

Eliciting change in norms is often a "two steps forward, one step back" proposition. It takes a constant emphasis on new behavior and a deemphasis on old. The new behavior must be "held in place" at first by special effort, until it becomes established and accepted. Once established, it will begin to change the more stable and underlying norm of behavior. Eventually, the new norm will become the accepted norm.

When teachers first put work on the walls, the result is predictable: The work is torn down. But the teachers "insist" on the new behavior and monitor the halls to make sure it is not torn down. Less and less work is torn down, and more and more students see work displayed. The students get used to having the work on the walls, and used to getting punished, perhaps, for tearing down work.

More importantly, some students begin to recognize displayed work as a behavior associated with different norms or values. They begin to perceive a different value system beneath the patterns of behavior in the school. They then begin to behave in ways consistent with the new norm system.

Several principles for improving school climate can be derived from this example. First, the new norm system must be clearly conceived and communicated and then uniformly applied throughout the school. The principal should maintain high and consistent expectations for children's behavior and achievement and should make sure that everyone knows these expectations. "Assume," state Wilbur Brookover and his colleagues,

> that all children can and will learn whatever the school defines as desirable and appropriate. Expect all children to learn these patterns of behavior rather than differentiate among those who are expected and those who are not expected to learn. Have common norms that apply to all children so that all members of the school social system expect a high level of performance by all students.

Second, the new norm system should be consistently enforced. The new behaviors expected should be "held" in place until the new norm system takes root. Failure to behave properly "should be followed by immediate feedback and reinstruction rather than positive reinforcement," as Brookover and his coauthors state. Reinforcement and praise should be given when behavior is appropriate.

Third, the move toward the new norm system should be undertaken gradually. Too much change at once should not be expected. Insistence on too much too fast may provoke revolt. "Most major change processes in education probably fail because they are too 'rushed'," states James Lipham. "Educational change is a time-consuming process; a major change takes many months, even years."

Fourth, the climate improvement program should be designed and implemented with the participation of others. Climate improvement must be a collective undertaking with staff members' full support and understanding. Goals should be clearly understood, and new patterns of behavior should be consistently enforced. By involving staff members in the decision-making process, as discussed in chapter 7, the school's personnel can approach the change process as a united, instead of a fragmented, group.

Reaching Success through Involvement

A third approach to improving school climate is Reaching Success through Involvement (RSI), developed at Vanderbilt University. At last count, RSI had been implemented in fourteen schools in five states, was being adopted by Tennessee for implementation in eighteen schools, and was in the process of being implemented in ten other schools in four states.

As explained by Willis J. Furtwengler, RSI is a long-term (twelve to thirty-six months) strategy for school improvement. Its eleven steps run from recognition by the principal and assistant principals of their responsibility for the school's overall effectiveness, through formation of a teachers' planning council, development of inservice programs, collection of data to assess progress being made, and (at the end of each year) election of new members of the planning council.

According to the theory behind RSI, educational organizations are dynamic social systems, and a strong learning culture can be created by purposeful changes in social agreements among members of the systems. Students are viewed as members of the organization, rather than clients, and should therefore participate in changing the culture and climate of the school.

A data analysis instrument, "The School Report Card," is used to provide ratings for three components of school productivity (academic achievement, socialized behavior, and public image); six components of school culture (structure and order, social acceptance, mission and vision, academic emphasis, and problem-solving); and school climate, defined as "the way teachers, administrators, and students feel about what they have agreed—explicitly and implicitly—to do in the school and about the actions taken pursuant to those agreements."

Perhaps the most striking features of RSI are (1) its focus on continuous planning and action throughout the school year and (2) its emphasis on involvement of *all* members of the school community. For instance, the planning council (consisting of administrators and teachers) and a student leadership group take part in a three-day retreat to focus on leadership training and problem-solving activities. At the retreat, task forces (with student representation) are formed to solve specific school problems. During the year, each task force holds four half-day meetings to assess the progress it is making and see what further work needs to be done.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data from the study support the conclusion that the RSI strategy of student involvement is a promising way to solve many problems in schools. Changes in the culture and climate at these schools were directly related to decisions by staff and students to solve specific problems in the following six areas: academic achievement, human relations, school spirit and pride, building and grounds, school image, and involvement.

School Climate Improvement Teams

A model for school climate improvement described by Donna H. O'-Neal and her colleagues uses a team approach. The model's seven stages begin with appointing a climate improvement team consisting of administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The succeeding steps include assessing areas in need of improvement, determining goals, developing a plan, implementing the plan, and evaluating the plan. After evaluating the plan, the program enters its final stage—modifying the plan, reorganizing the climate improvement team, and, in effect, beginning the process all over again.

A key feature of the model outlined by O'Neal and associates is its detailed planning. In the planning stage, specific objectives are stated, strategies for meeting those objectives are determined, resources needed are identified, specific individuals are assigned responsibility for carrying out the strategies and using the resources, and timeliness for achieving the goals are given.

Another team-based process for improving school climate is described by Eugene Howard and his colleagues. Their process places the emphasis on strengthening the positive aspects of a school's climate:

> The traditional approach to school improvement is to identify problems and then attempt to solve them. Such an approach can result in improvement; however, it will not result in excellence. Excellence comes by making what is working well work even better and by spreading successful practice.

The eight-step process begins with the appointment of a School Improvement Management Team, which then collects baseline data for use in measuring the results of the project over time. The third step—making faculty, students, and parents aware of the improvement plan—is achieved through workshops and other activities. Assessing the school's climate is the next step (the authors append the CFK, Ltd., School Climate Profile and other instruments for this purpose).

At the fifth step, say Howard and associates, "faculty, parent, and student leaders . . . brainstorm ideas on promising practices for improving the school's climate" and then "prioritize the ideas for an action plan." Next the School Improvement Management Team forms a task force for each priority identified in step 5. As the task forces initiate and carry out activities, the team, in step 7, supports and manages the task forces' work. Finally, the team evaluates the process, comparing new data on the school's climate with those collected in step 2.

Other Collaborative Approaches

Virtually all the models for improving school climate reviewed in this section can be described as collaborative approaches. That is, they involve all members of the school community both in identifying problems and in designing and implementing the climate improvement plan. Two other collaborative models are described by Patricia Duttweiler and by Gordon Donaldson, Jr. and Theodore Coladarci.

Duttweiler describes the Learning Climate Improvement Process designed by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) to help schools identify aspects of their learning climate in need of improvement. The program uses a participatory, problem-solving format that involves all members of the school community in addressing the perceived problems.

The Learning Climate Inventory, an instrument designed by SEDL, is first used to gather and measure the perceptions of a school's climate held by administrators, teachers, other school staff, students, and parents. The inventory consists of items derived from research on effective schools that focus on the following areas: collaborative problem-solving and decision-making, instructional leadership, high expectations for students, developing a safe and orderly environment, curriculum and instructional practices, monitoring school progress, and involving parents and the community.

Results of this inventory are then presented to the assembled members of the school community, who identify those aspects of the learning climate that were perceived as satisfactory and those in need of improvement. Members of the school community decide how many of these aspects can be reasonably addressed in a school improvement program and then form committees to develop an action plan for each identified problem. The action plan should clearly identify the problem, set specific goals and a time-line for reaching those goals, and establish evaluation procedures for determining when each goal has been reached.

According to Duttweiler, the strength of the Learning Climate Improvement Process lies in its emphasis on involving the entire school community in school assessment and improvement based on the latest and best research findings.

Models for improving school climate necessarily rely on subjective data—the perceptions of various school constituencies about the school in which they work. Donaldson and Coladarci have seized upon this inherent subjectivity to develop a recursive school improvement model based on collaborative self-assessment. The authors' intervention in four rural Maine school districts had three objectives: (1) to make school members aware of the importance and utility of systematic data collection; (2) to help school members see their perceptions of school life as significant sources of data about school life; and (3) to help school members understand the complex ways in which their views, if consciously changed, can interact with other members' views and attitudes to change the quality of school life for everyone.

First, school staff were consulted to determine aspects of school climate they regarded as most problematic; on the basis of this, a locally specific set of school climate instruments was developed for the district, which administered these surveys to teachers, students, and parents, analyzed the results, and prepared a report. Next, school staff members were convened to review the results. The consultants showed them how to approach the data, looking for themes, contradictions, and possible policy implications. Thereafter, school members met to discuss findings and to devise a plan of action for climate improvement.

From this project in which researchers assisted four school districts, three "lessons" were learned. First, staff and citizens are more receptive to survey results when they have had a hand in developing the instruments. Second, most were eager to read and discuss their own school climate assessments; motivation was not a problem. Third, the staff development that results from the process itself may produce greater climate improvement than the specific action strategies that the program produced.

Each particular school or school district must decide which approach toward school climate improvement best fits its needs and circumstances. A method good for one school or district might not work in another. What does seem clear is that *no* approach is likely to work unless the administrators involved can engage the active support of other members of the school community.

Practical Suggestions

Practicing educators and administrators tend to view school climate in terms different from those used by researchers such as Halpin and Croft. Practitioners are quite understandably more concerned with what to do to improve organizational climate than with precise measurement and description of climate. In this pragmatically oriented literature, school administrators have recounted their schools' successful efforts to improve "climate," though usually they use climate in a rather general way and frequently mean it to be analogous to morale.

These administrator-generated articles definitely accentuate the positive. The administrator, whether superintendent or principal, is viewed as a leader whose actions can shape (and improve) the attitudes of staff, students, and community. The emphasis in most of this literature is on action rather than on analysis or reflection.

For example, William Maynard describes efforts to improve school climate in Cleveland High School in Seattle. Like many others on improving school climate, this article lacks a clear definition of what a good school climate is, but as evidence of improvement Maynard cites the pride that once alienated and apathetic students now have in their school and a significant fall in the absentee rate. Maynard began by selecting a school climate improvement team of students and faculty to develop projects and ideas to improve the school. Such ideas included a student "who's who" committee, hall murals painted by students and focusing on the theme "We've got pride," and an increase in shared decision-making in school. It is of note that Maynard, unlike early researchers, sees student morale as a central determiner of school climate.

Some attempts have been made to synthesize a research approach to school climate (description, analysis) with the pragmatic, action-oriented approach. One notable example is CFK Ltd.'s School Climate Profile, included in the *Handbook for Conducting School Climate Improvement Projects*, by Eugene Howard and colleagues. The School Climate Profile, say the authors, can be used to assess "people's perceptions of what are and what should be the positive climate factors and determinants in a school."

The four components of the Climate Profile questionnaire are meant to measure general climate factors (such as "respect," "high morale," "continuous academic and social growth," and "caring"), program determinants (such as "opportunities for active learning," "varied reward systems," and "varied learning environments"), process determinants (such as "improvement of school goals," "effective communications," "involvement in decision making," and "effective teaching-learning strategies"), and material determinants ("adequate resources," "supportive and efficient logistical system," and "suitability of school plant").

Willard Hopkins and Kay Crain recount how efforts at climate improvement at Fairfield (Ohio) High School were in large part responsible for dramatic improvements in the school's American College Testing scores; in foreign language, math, and science enrollment; and in attendance—all accompanied by decreased failure and dropout rates. Changes that directly or indirectly contributed to these results included increased emphasis on homework, a core curriculum for college-bound students, parental involvement in scheduling students' classes, and a system for recognizing outstanding student achievement. In addition, Fairfield, like Cleveland High School, emphasized student involvement in decision-making.

Frank Clark has listed "practical and specific suggestions" for improving school climate. These include suggestions like forming a teacher advisory board, instituting a student forum, and issuing a variety of feedback forms for staff and students. An example of one feedback form is the "Quick Reply Form" on which a staff member is able to express an important concern that needs a reply within forty-eight hours. According to Clark, "When working smoothly, it's an excellent form, all but eliminating critical feelings from the staff."

Floyd Coppedge and Lois Exendine say that school and classroom climates can best be improved by implementing behavioral reinforcement strategies at the classroom level. Healthy classroom environments are the crucial components of a healthy school climate, they say. Rather than relying on the conventional, simplistic strategies of verbal and written praise for students, teachers should strive to create a classroom climate that in itself is reinforcing. This environment should involve all students, provide intrinsic rather than extrinsic rewards, and promote active learning in a stimulating, scholarly atmosphere. In such an environment, students can receive positive reinforcement from the following sources:

- a rich and stimulating curriculum
- teaching methods that allow students to actively assimilate and use new information
- a firm but humane system of classroom management that rewards good behavior as well as curbing disruption
- human relations skills that emphasize mutual respect
- consistent, supportive evaluation that provides useful feedback to students without stigmatizing them

Establishing such a supportive environment is not easy, Coppedge and Exendine acknowledge, but principals can help by providing teacher supervision and inservice training to encourage these kinds of reinforcement practices in classrooms. The resulting enhancement of classroom climates will carry over to the school as a whole.

Attempts to improve school climate need not adopt an all or nothing approach. Many times, a school can make significant improvements simply by focusing on a few key problem areas. Timothy F. Brown describes one high school faced with three chronic problems: smoking on campus, truancy from selected classes, and schedule changes (students changing their schedules frivolously after classes had already started). The`school launched a two-pronged attack on these problems: first, setting up and enforcing rules to alleviate these particular "symptoms" of a poor school climate, and, second, forming working committees to involve students, parents, and teachers in getting at the root causes of the problems and figuring out long-term solutions.

At Clarkston Junior High School (Clarkston, Michigan), efforts at improving school climate emphasize improving students' perceptions of themselves and of their relationships with faculty members and administrators. Vincent F. Licata, assistant principal, lists a number of ways in which the junior high school has sought to improve those perceptions. These include a "school mission that emphasizes that every student will receive at least one success experience a year," a Teacher Advisor Group program ensuring that "each student has one special adult within the school who knows and accepts him/her," and playnights in which faculty members and students can play sports together during the evenings.

Robert L. Eichholtz suggests that when it comes to improving school climate, attention to even the smallest of details can help. One simple suggestion he offers is for the school's principal to make it a point of getting to know every student by name. Such a little thing as being recognized by the principal when walking down the halls can have a salutary impact on a student's attitudes and behavior.

It appears from the literature, then, that there are as many ideas on what a healthy school climate is and how to achieve it as there are ideas on what, in individuals, constitutes a healthy personality and how to achieve it. Yet the actual experiences of school leaders suggest that this lack of agreement and the lack of any hard data concerning the effectiveness of school climate improvement efforts may not be insurmountable problems. What seems to be true in practice is that almost any approach to climate improvement undertaken with energy and optimism helps enormously to improve school morale, communication, and relationships with staff, students, and community.

Conclusion

School climate is the feel an individual gets from his or her experiences within a school's social system. This feel or "subtle spirit" is the "global summation" of the individual's perceptions of how school personnel and students behave and interact. These behaviors, in turn, are largely determined by the underlying norms in the school, which dictate what kinds of behaviors and interactions are appropriate. Norms are largely self-perpetuating: the behaviors they define tend to reinforce and confirm the norms that gave rise to them.

Improving a school's climate depends on understanding the norm-behavior cycle and how to intervene in it properly with behavior modification or organization development techniques. Numerous instruments for measuring school climate have been developed that can help administrators diagnose their climates before they attempt change. The experiences and suggestions of other administrators can also help school leaders understand climate and how it might be improved.

A healthy school climate is important because it is associated with higher student achievement, better behavior, and better attitudes. A large amount of research shows that the structures of social interaction and behavior in the school influence the student outcomes of the school. Thus, improving climate appears to be not only a worthwhile but an essential undertaking.

Part 3

The Skills

Chapter 9

Leading the Instructional Program

James R. Weber

Careful observation of leaders usually shows that leaders are savvy performers who know their environments, their goals, and their limits, and who often compromise for the good of the organization. Although charisma is undeniably a part of leadership, it probably assumes the same proportion as Edison's inspiration: the 1 percent that develops after the 99 percent of hard work and careful analysis.

In fact, the most revealing definitions of instructional leadership do not even mention charisma. Instead, they talk about the workmanlike care of administrators, lead teachers, and others who put excellence of the instructional program first in their working (not just their verbal) priorities:

> Instructional leadership is the principal's role in providing direction, resources, and support to teachers and students for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school. (James Keefe and John Jenkins)

> We broadly interpret the concept of instructional leadership to encompass those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning. Generally such actions focus on setting schoolwide goals, defining the purpose of schooling, providing the resources needed for learning to occur, supervising and evaluating teachers, coordinating staff development programs, and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers. (Wynn De Bevoise)

> Instructional leadership is leadership that is directly related to the processes of instruction where teachers, learners, and the curriculum interact . . . . To exert leadership over this process, the principal or other leader must deal with—in the case of teachers—supervision, evaluation, staff development, and inservice training. In governing the content of instruction, that is, the curriculum, the instructional leader will oversee materials selection and exercise choices in scope and sequence, unit construction, and design of activities. (Keith A. Acheson with Stuart C. Smith)

The general goal of instructional leaders, then, is to improve or maintain conditions that encourage student learning. But to do this a principal must balance the needs of a particular school, the needs of the community in which it is set, and the resources he or she can bring to instructional management.

Although researchers approach the topic of instructional leadership from various perspectives, collectively their findings suggest that it is a dynamic process. Instructional leadership is long-term dedication to instructional excellence, not a one-time resolution to "get more involved in instruction." It includes both instructional and school management issues: evaluation of teachers and students, school climate, curriculum, discipline, material resources for teaching, community support, staffing, decision-making methods at the department and administrative levels, short- and long-term goals for instruction, personal interaction between administrators and teachers, and so forth. As the research suggests, leading the instructional program requires both an understanding of educational technique and a personal vision of academic excellence that can be translated into effective classroom strategies.

Principals perform many tasks. Their days always seem to be on the run: meeting with parents, fielding queries or problems from the central office, dealing with students' discipline troubles, coordinating care of the physical plant, looking into instructional planning, and handling faculty relationships, to mention only a few tasks. A case can be made that any of these activities can have some impact on the instructional program. The majority of this chapter is organized, however, around five central activities that most directly influence a school's instructional program:

- defining the school's mission
- managing curriculum and instruction
- promoting a positive learning climate
- observing and giving feedback to teachers
- assessing the instructional program

Before discussing these tasks, it is important to consider the environment in which these tasks are performed. In the community, the school's organization, and the values held by its staff reside both the problems and the resources with which instructional leaders work.

Then, at the end of the chapter, attention turns to a consideration of whether other individuals, not just the principal, can share the responsibility for instructional leadership.

The Contexts of Instructional Leadership

> The leader's integrity is not idealistic. It rests on a pragmatic knowledge of how things work. —Lao Tzu

To understand how principals can affect the instructional environment of schools, we must first examine the contexts in which the principal must function. Principals operate in a multilevel world, working with influences both within and outside of the school—with community members and their interests as well as with teachers, students, and other administrators. Personal characteristics and beliefs also affect principals' decision-making processes and their style of instructional leadership.

The Community Context

The impact of the community on the behavior of principals and the nature of their work was so evident, say David Dwyer and other researchers from the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, after closely examining the activities of five successful principals, that they had to modify their model of instructional management. These researchers followed each of the five principals for three workdays each, observing and interviewing them about their intentions and actions. They were primarily interested in how successful principals organize their school's instruction and what roles they play in managing the instructional process. Researchers spent twenty to thirty hours in each school observing classes and talking to students and teachers. Documents pertaining to each school's instructional process were also analyzed. After analyzing the data they gathered, the researchers concluded that the attention of these principals was often devoted to matters external to the school building.

Some of the principals viewed their involvement in community-related tasks in a negative light, as something that reduced the time they could devote to other kinds of tasks. When principals must spend time negotiating with the police, for instance, they have less time to devote to instruction-related activities. On the other hand, principals tap community resources for needed materials or personnel. Community support can be important at school board meetings and in a variety of school-related fundraising activities. Indeed, community support for unorthodox programs or approaches may serve as a buffer between a principal and the central office. The Far West Lab's study mentions one principal who felt a particular responsibility to his low-income community, defining his role as both a community leader and a school leader. Consequently, he took a personal interest in the problems of students and their parents.

A community's influences on the instructional process of the school are reflected in the Far West Lab's study as well. Student turnover, for instance, is affected by the mobility of families in a district, making student placement a continuing concern for some principals. Funding cuts, resulting from decisions beyond district control, produced heightened concerns about bond issues and, thus, about the erosion of public support for instructional programs.

Moreover, the socioeconomic status of the community appears to be related to successful principals' management styles. A study by Phillip Hallinger and Joseph Murphy suggests that successful principals in low-income communities tend to be strong managers who assume more authority in instructional matters than do their counterparts in higher-income communities. They also tend to be more actively involved in supervising instruction and in trying to improve school climate. They are instrumental, say Hallinger and Murphy, in creating climate. Higher-income communities, on the other hand, tend to give their principals the role of organizational monitor: coordinating the curriculum, evaluating instruction, and checking on student progress.

Similar findings are reported by Shirley Jackson and her colleagues, Richard Andrews and his colleagues, and other researchers who have found that effective low-income urban schools are led by assertive principals with a centralized leadership style. Such principals assume more authority in setting individual teachers' instructional agendas.

The Institutional Context

It is noteworthy that such "external" factors as community socioeconomic status (SES) may influence how a principal tends to manage instruction. However, schools can also be considered as institutional "cultures" with their own particular characters. Like other kinds of institutions—corporations, political parties, and churches, for instance—schools have unique institutional "cultures." But unlike many other institutions, schools do not tend to be hierarchical in structure, with neatly established lines of authority and communication.

Terrence Deal and Lynn Celotti studied principals' influence on classrooms in 103 elementary schools in 34 San Francisco Bay area school districts. They found that, although collateral services such as food services or supplies may be managed in top-down fashion, instruction is not effectively coordinated through formal channels: "For administrators who approach subordinates or superiors assuming that schools operated on a business or industrial logic, one can predict conflict, personal tension or disillusionment, and reduced administrative effectiveness."

Thus, leadership in instruction is not merely a matter of putting a leader's intentions into action. Instructional leaders work within a context in which their workers—that is, teachers—must be trusted as well as trained. Principals must work with the existing resources in a school and improve the quality of instruction through strategies of persuasion and change. When attempting to manage instruction, principals must not disregard the existing norms in their schools. The question for instructional leaders, then, becomes how they can recognize and contribute norms that positively influence instruction.

Steven Bossert and colleagues found that studies have identified at least four characteristics of effective school cultures. These characteristics form a picture that may help to clarify what instructional leaders can hope to accomplish in their pursuit of instructional excellence. Successful schools tend to have

- a school climate conducive to learning—i.e., one that is free from disciplinary problems and vandalism
- a schoolwide emphasis on basic skills instruction
- the expectation among teachers that all students can achieve
- a system of clear instructional objectives for monitoring and assessing students' performances

These characteristics of effective schools appear to be the outgrowth of *school norms*, that is, the expectations collectively held and generally striven after by principals and teachers in these schools. Judith Warren Little has noted that successful schools always have two vital norms that help to shape teachers' interactions with principals and with each other. First, there is a norm of *collegiality*, by which teachers expect to work closely together as colleagues. Second, there is a norm of *continuous improvement*, meaning that teachers often scrutinize and discuss their teaching practices, and that experimentation in teaching strategies is encouraged. These norms testify to the mutual support and professional interactions among the staff in effective schools.

The Management Styles of Instructional Leaders

In addition to the community and institutional influences, a third factor also affects principals' management behaviors—their personal characteristics. Even when differences in community and institutional contexts are taken into account, the management styles of successful principals vary widely. Whereas some principals manage by maintaining existing norms in a school and influence others by suggestions, others exercise control over instructional practices at the classroom level, monitoring and even changing teachers' lesson plans.

Of course, principals' behaviors are not solely controlled by their temperaments; as mentioned above, they are also influenced by the surrounding community and by the school itself. The Far West Lab study suggests that principals' management styles may be less obtrusive in schools with established, veteran faculty, and more interventionist in schools with less experienced or rapidly shifting faculties.

Nevertheless, principals do seem to exercise their authority with distinctly individual styles. Such stylistic preferences also have some influence over the way principals structure their schools and over which behaviors they reward and how they reward them.

It is clear that principals need not be born with charismatic personalities to be effective instructional leaders. Indeed, the conclusion of most recent research is that several different personal styles seem to be effective in providing instructional leadership. Ethnographic studies of principals by Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield and by Dwyer and others suggest that the personal characteristics of strong instructional leaders are extremely diverse: some are assertive leaders, others are facilitative; some prefer centralized authority over instructional matters, others give teachers instructional autonomy.

Although successful principals possess a wide range of personal characteristics, a few traits seem to be present in most successful instructional leaders. The welfare of the students in their care is probably the single most important concern of successful principals. With their eyes on this ultimate goal—improved student learning—good instructional leaders are able to modify or alter their preferred modes when situations require. Dwyer and his colleagues observed that such situations usually "evolved rapidly in the setting and were based on the principal's perception that a child or children in the school were in physical or emotional jeopardy." Blumberg and Greenfield also point out that many of the effective principals they studied were innovators who retained improving student learning as their goal but continually sought new ways to achieve this goal. Successful principals defined what was possible for them to do only after testing the limits. They avoided prior assumptions about what could and could not be accomplished.

A third quality of successful principals, noted by Dwyer and others, was the predictable routine set down by effective instructional leaders. "With their students and their own overarching goals in mind," these researchers say, "the principals invested their time in the management of the mundane details of their organizations: the physical and emotional elements of the school environment, school-community relations, the teaching staff, schoolwide student achievement, and individual student progress."

One principal, for instance, greeted children as they came to school in the morning. He was a visible presence in the school, who moved through the halls, visited classrooms, talked to teachers and students, and examined students' work. He also expressed interest in students' learning modes—aural, visual, or kinesthetic—urging teachers to adapt lessons to students' preferred modes of learning.

Although these routines involve common acts of the principalship, the researchers stress that the "success of these activities for instructional management hinges . . . on the principal's capacity to connect them to the instructional system." Dwyer terms this routine, pragmatic approach to instructional management a "strategy of incremental action." Routine activities performed by principals can help keep schools moving toward long-term goals such as maintaining norms of student behavior, suggesting changes in teaching, or developing an awareness of the distractions and changes underway in the school. The effects of these routine actions can be substantial if a principal carefully selects the routines he or she performs.

A principal in the Dwyer study succeeded in focusing the energy in her schools on instruction by reducing the number of school rules from twenty to six. Students were able to memorize the rules more easily, allowing discipline to be simplified. Furthermore, she used the contacts she had with students for disciplinary reasons as opportunities for direct teaching, asking students to bring their homework with them when they met with her. She checked their work and informally tested their understanding of the material.

In general, then, successful principals have a pragmatic understanding of the school environment that assists them in their efforts to improve student performance. Such pragmatism requires influencing the school environment, first through modes of behavior that encourage positive learning outcomes, and second through routine activities that make their work reliable and visible.

The Principal's Influence

With these perspectives, we can answer the question, "How can principals actually have an effect on teacher performance and student learning?" Principals can encourage the adoption of institutional norms that favor collegiality, instructional improvement, and student achievement. They can wield influence in areas that are related either directly or indirectly to instruction. Direct influence can occur in observation and evaluation of teachers, for instance, or in reviewing curriculum. Indirect influence, which can also affect school norms, can occur in setting general instructional goals for the school, garnering community support for instructional programs, organizing and staffing programs, and placing students in appropriate classes.

Given these findings, it is useful to examine more specific strategies that instructional leadership requires, to move from discussing factors that contribute to a principal's general effectiveness to those domains often cited as essential to strong instructional management.

Defining the School's Mission

Because schools are loosely coupled organizations (the workers enjoy relative autonomy in nearly all essential aspects of their work), motivating staff members to work toward common goals can be a major task for an instructional leader. A shared sense of direction already exists in most tightly coupled systems. But in schools, staff members need to be reminded of goals and need a firm but flexible hand on the helm. According to Karl Weick, "The administrator of a loosely coupled system centralizes the system on key values and decentralizes everything else." Reaching a consensus on instructional goals, then, is extremely important.

Common goals are the glue that binds the system together. "Articulating a theme, reminding people of the theme, and helping people to apply the theme to interpret their work," Weick asserts, "all are major tasks of administrators in loosely coupled systems."

The theme a principal may choose to articulate may be a synthesis of the influences discussed in the previous section—a community's long-term needs; his or her personal vision of what a school can be; and realistic, attainable day-to-day objectives in the classroom. To find the theme, a principal may need to assess the values and strengths inherent in the community, students, and staff.

Addressing Community Expectations

As James Lipham and his colleagues point out, the broad objectives of schools have generally encompassed at least four dimensions: intellectual, social, personal (including aesthetic, ethical, and physical), and vocational. Both those outside of and within a school are likely to agree on the need for schools to address these four dimensions. However, which of these dimensions receives the greatest emphasis may shift from time to time; certainly, at any given time, one community interest group may be more influential than another.

Of course, principals may be hard pressed to distinguish between significant and insignificant changes in community expectations. For instance, although there has been a gradual shift in emphasis from intellectual skills to personal and social skills in school curricula, communities still expect schools to teach students the academic basics. Principals can monitor the community's real needs by being actively involved in community groups, attending professional meetings to compare experiences, or taking courses in the sociology, politics, or history of society's demands on schools.

A principal can identify the community issues affecting instruction more formally by conducting a needs assessment survey, by indepth interviews with community members, or by initiating an ongoing community group. Moreover, Lipham and his colleagues strongly recommend associating issues with particular community figures—noting their roles in the community, their reputations vis-a-vis the schools, or their positions on issues in the past.

A Vision for Success

The community may provide a frame of reference for defining a school's mission, but it is the leaders' visions that guide the day-to-day functioning of schools. In Dwyer and others' study of eight principals, all the successful principals "had a working theory that guided their actions. They all sought to understand how modifications in the structures of their schools influenced youngsters." All the participants in the study thought of themselves as "the pivotal points" around which the disparate pieces of the school turned. Blumberg and Greenfield also found principals' visions to be a leavening agent. They quote some of the principals on what they want their schools to be, noting the diversity in content but the similarity in the strength of their individual visions. The following samples are representative:

> What I don't want it to be is a single-minded approach. I don't want

> it to be an open school or a traditional school, or a school without walls, or a math school or a science school . . . . I want to be able to accommodate the different learning styles of different kids and teachers, the different strengths of different teachers. I think if we have that rare person who is an excellent lecturer, I say let that person lecture, and in fact, encourage that person to lecture . . . capitalize on those strengths.
>
> I figure if the staff gets educated, and gets exposed to new ideas, they'll transmit them to kids . . . and I found it very frustrating in the beginning to realize where they were, because I kept thinking they were here, and I'd get more data and find out they were even further back than that . . . . They're flying by the seat of their pants. They don't know why they're doing it. They're doing the wrong thing up in their own classroom, and I don't think that's okay. I think they need to know why they're doing what they're doing. Maybe they won't change a thing . . . but at least if they know . . . what purpose it has to the total picture, then that's okay.
>
> When I went in there . . . I think the essential thing was to make calm out of chaos . . . . For the most part we were successful in doing that . . . . I don't think I was successful in turning around the education program . . . in terms of scholastic achievement. Each year we took an increasingly larger number of students who were already academically troubled in reading and basic skills . . . and we instituted programs to deal with this clientele but I always felt that we were not getting them to achieve . . . . We had too many kids graduating with "D" averages, just barely minimum, and that was the failure that I saw.

Successful leaders do not stop with envisioning what they want for the schools, though. They also actively work to realize their vision. According to Blumberg and Greenfield, "it was this personal commitment to a particular educational or organizational ideal, and their willingness to articulate and work for what they believed in and felt was vital to the success of the students and teachers in their schools, that distinguish [successful principals] from many of their administrative peers." Indeed, perhaps because they have an overarching vision of what the school could be, these leaders are better able to take the initiative in improving instruction. Because of their educational ideals, for instance, they can emphasize student achievement and teacher performance despite community and institutional pressures to settle for mediocrity or a diffusion of energy. Moreover, acting on their ideals for the school probably prevents them from getting bogged down in administrative trivia. They tend to share the paperwork with other administrative staff, allowing themselves more time to pursue instructional leadership initiatives.

Although visions can provide direction and impetus for instructional leadership, leaders must involve other people in the realization of these visions. The process of staff involvement means communicating goals—perhaps being willing to revise unrealistic goals but insisting upon approaches consistent with the leader's overarching ideals of schooling.

The setting of overall objectives for schooling, program objectives, course objectives, and unit objectives serves to translate theory about outcomes into reality. In these objectives, the broad goals become visibly related to the students and to classroom activities. An instructional leader, researchers agree, must attend to each of these levels of objectives (from the school as a whole down to each unit), reviewing and monitoring them for consistency and relevance. Careful attention to the program, course, and unit objectives will enable the leader to tranform instruction.

Managing Curriculum and Instruction

The implementation of a school's mission can be seen most clearly in curriculum and instruction. As in defining goals, the major tasks confronting a principal in implementation may actually be recognizing the instructional options available to teachers and then selecting, with teachers, those that best fit the constraints provided by the school environment.

That instructional leaders need to know about instructional methods and trends is fairly obvious. While a perceptive yet untrained observer may be able to discern gaps in a teacher's presentation, leaders need to provide informed advice and communicate priorities for improvement. At the very least, instructional leaders must share with teachers an understanding of instructional goals and a common language for describing and analyzing teaching practices. This sort of knowledge may be acquired most readily when instructional training and study includes both principals and teachers, as Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little attest. Collegiality, which Little defines as "recourse to other's knowledge and experience, and to shared work and discussion," has a profound effect on instructional success.

Essential Knowledge

Of course, a principal's knowledge must be credible to teachers. A list of some of the areas of knowledge needed in instructional leadership, such as the one following, may discourage potential leaders at first. However, as with most lists of skills, a practitioner's working knowledge of these areas may be greater than he or she assumes:

Trends in content fields, such as

- English/Language Arts
- Reading
- Foreign Languages
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical and Health Education
- Social Studies

Trends in Media and Methods, such as those in

- Textbook Selection
- New Technologies
- Teacher-Developed Materials
- Computer Software
- Personalized Education
- Direct Instruction
- Mastery Learning
- Cooperative Small-Group Learnng
- Study Skills

Classroom Supervision Areas, such as

- Teaching Styles
- Class Size
- Grouping Practices
- Use of Time and Space
- Instructional Strategies
- Instructional Media/Materials
- Homework

Considering this list of knowledge and trends, it is doubtful that every principal can master all the information necessary to be a perfect curriculum advisor, as well as perform all the other duties in the principal's job description. Like a good infielder, though, it is not so important for principals to be everywhere or know everything, but to be in the right place at the right time (or to know the "right stuff" to improve a teacher's instruction). So, how much must a principal know about instruction?

There are two basic components to what principals need to know: (1) the general processes common to effective teaching and learning, and (2) the specific needs and interests of their school's instructional staff. Within these two areas, principals can have a pragmatic understanding of curriculum and instruction.

In short, they must be experts on the general principles of effective teaching. At the very least, they must understand basic principles of learning: that examples allow concretion of abstract ideas, that students should grasp one concept before moving on to another, and that group instruction and individual instruction may meet different needs.

Next, most administrators seem to agree that, to be effective instructional leaders, principals should acquire information and advocate skills that are interdisciplinary. Writing and library use, for instance, are cross-disciplinary skills; principals can encourage writing in most of the students' classes or require them to use the library for research projects.

Knowledge and Skills for Effective Supervision

To be an effective supervisor of teachers, an instructional leader must also be familiar with and sensitive to the teachers he or she supervises. According to Keith Acheson, many would-be instructional leaders often simply see what teachers are doing and then tell them what they ought to do differently. "This simple approach overlooks the reality that only when teachers are able to do what they *intend* can much progress be made toward getting them to do what they *should* be doing." It is critical to make sure that teachers share the same goals as their leaders—to see that they are intending to do what they should be doing. Thus, evaluation and training are inseparable activities.

Acheson maintains that a principal needs to have knowledge and skills in three areas when observing and evaluating teachers: planning with the teacher, observing instruction or gathering data from other sources, and providing feedback. Says Acheson,

> *Intelligent planning* requires a knowledge of the personality and characteristics of the teacher. In addition to knowing strategies, research, and subject matter, the instructional leader must be knowledgeable of observation instruments and techniques for taking systematic data.
>
> *Recording useful data* in the classroom requires skill, practice, and understanding a variety of techniques along with a knack for being unobtrusive.
>
> *Skillful giving of feedback* relies on knowledge of:
>
> —a variety of teaching strategies or models of teaching
>
> —what has been learned about teacher effectiveness through research
>
> —the subject matter being taught (to analyze the process in relation to the content)
>
> —human development and child psychology (to analyze what students are doing—and maybe even why)
>
> —the official curriculum, pertinent policies, regulations, and laws

Acheson's list implies that instructional leaders need to know both what affects learning and how to communicate those principles to teachers.

Inservice training can help clarify teachers' intentions as well as bring intentions and performance together. They may also help to establish schoolwide goals and a common vocabulary of teaching that is shared by all the instructional staff. A principal who participates in—or even directs—inservice training will be much better prepared to perform meaningful teacher observations later. Inservice programs can be schoolwide or specific to certain departments (intended for the math faculty only, for instance). These inservice sessions can afford principals opportunities for centralizing teaching methods or "eavesdropping" on trends in specific content areas.

Learning from Teachers

Principals' knowledge of curriculum and instruction can be extended greatly by listening to teachers. Since it is unlikely that anyone will have comprehensive knowledge of all instructional areas, instructional leaders can keep their expectations and judgments of teachers realistic by watching and listening. Insights gained from listening may require patience and a temporary suspension of judgment on the principal's part. One principal, for example, questioned a teacher's abilities because the teacher's approach seemed somewhat unorthodox:

> For two years, during observations of and visits with her, [the principal] tried to understand her procedures and her rationales for them. At the end of that time, the principal admitted that he still did not fully understand all aspects of the teacher's performance. But he said that he had gathered enough information to convince him that she was highly effective with students—and thus he supported her strongly. (Rutherford)

Because there are so many variables in teaching and learning, an unorthodox approach may actually be in the mainstream of real education. Managing curriculum and instruction involves being familiar with content areas, instructional goals, and the wide range of approaches that can be used to meet those goals.

Encouraging Collaborative Planning

Principals can also learn about a school's range of instructional goals by encouraging teachers to plan collectively for instructional improvement and then sitting in on their planning sessions. Schools can have teacher teams plan curriculum or learning goals, or they can assign temporary task forces to address schoolwide instructional problems. In these arrangements, teachers identify the goals (the instructional problems to be solved) and the new approaches to be initiated in their areas of expertise.

Karolyn J. Snyder, an educational consultant, compares schools to football teams in their organizational possibilities. Just as teams are trained in units, so, too, can schools perform staff development in specialized units: "Principals might well seek to organize instruction around teaching teams for various age levels (for instance, 5-7, 8-9, 10-12) so that teachers can specialize in particular teaching functions (math, record keeping, ordering, student management, and team management) for the benefit of the entire team." In this sort of goal-setting arrangement, the principal can monitor the team's goals and make sure they complement the overall instructional goals of the department and the school for grade levels.

Promoting a Positive Learning Climate

Of all the important factors that appear to affect students' learning, perhaps having greatest influence is the set of beliefs, values, and attitudes teachers and students hold about learning. Lawrence Lezotte and his colleagues define *learning climate* as "the norms, beliefs, and attitudes reflected in institutional patterns and behavior practices that enhance or impede student learning."

The attitudes that students form about academic learning come, at least in part, from the adults in the school. In studies of both effective and ineffective schools, it is clear that the norms for learning come from the staff's requirements of students: the amount of time needed for studying, the amount of work assigned, the degree of independent work students can do, the degree of preparedness students feel about the work given them, the appropriate behaviors for school, and the staff's judgments of whether students are capable of learning. Of all these variables—all are controllable by the adults in the school—the most important is probably the expectations and judgments about students' abilities to learn.

Effect of Teacher Expectations on Student Achievement

Teacher expectations, in particular, have been linked to student achievement in two ways. Directly, teacher expectations affect the amount of time they devote to instruction, the time they spend interacting with students, and the quality of materials and activities they use. Indirectly, teacher expectations are transmitted to students and form the students' expectations and sense of the worth of academic work. That is, "the norms, expectations and attitudes that students hold come from their perceptions of what is appropriate in a given social setting," say Wilbur B. Brookover and colleagues, the authors of an intensive inservice program concentrating on improving school learning climate. Whether directly or indirectly, then, the messages that teachers and other staff send also return to them in the form of student norms.

In a school where expectations are low, the attitudes of teacher and students can form a vicious circle, a destructive self-fulfilling prophecy: "Students probably can't get this, so why try?" or "Nobody's paying much attention to whether I learn this or not, so why try?" The power of self-fulfilling prophecies such as these is insidious. They are difficult to change because they generate the evidence to substantiate their own bias. Furthermore, when we make self-fulfilling prophecies, we nearly always do so unconsciously, making them difficult to detect.

Benjamin Bloom holds that almost all students are capable of achieving age- and grade-level objectives. James H. Block and Lorin W. Anderson made this the basis of their program of Learning for Mastery; they, too, propose making objectives attainable for students by returning to objectives until they are mastered. This belief is quite revolutionary when compared to the operating assumptions of many schools, which stratify students according to levels of expectations.

There is evidence, for instance, that ability groupings quickly become levels of expectations. When students are placed in lower strata, teachers often rationalize an overdose of practice and a much slower pace than is actually required (Joan Hyman and Alan S. Cohen). The result is bored, discouraged students in the lower groups, reinforcing initial assumptions about those students' abilities.

Taken seriously, the belief that nearly all students can learn at their age and grade levels creates a positive self-fulfilling prophecy, the reverse of the negative, prejudiced view. Because teachers are most often unaware of their behaviors, one of the first tasks of instructional leaders may be to set the tone of high expectations for students and teachers. Perhaps the most effective way of doing so is to offer as part of the school's educational goals that teachers and support staff will strive for every student meeting age- and grade-level objectives. High expectations are a fulcrum point that supervisors can use to pry teachers and staff away from unhelpful, unencouraging habits of instruction.

According to Brookover and colleagues, raising or lowering expectations has been shown to change a teacher's range of instructional activities. When teachers lower their expectations of students, they incorporate fewer of the following essential instructional elements in their teaching repertoires. When they raise their expectations, they use more of these elements.

- Amount and quality of praise for correct answers
- Actual amount of teaching students receive
- Content covered
- Response opportunity factor—number of times students are called on—extent to which the question is challenging—degree of cognitive demands
- Academic content (and more nonacademic activities)
- Verbal and nonverbal warmth and acceptance of the student in general
- Nonverbal cues—amount of: eye contact—forward lean—affirmative head nods—smiles—physical contact
- General encouragement and support
- Teacher assistance and willingness to help
- Wait time (the amount of time a student is given to respond to a question before the teacher gives the answer or moves on to another student)
- High academic evaluations—reflected by percentage of students expected to: master skills—complete high school or attend college—do A or B work
- Reinstruction of students in failure situations (i.e., probing, restating questions, giving hints, etc., until student arrives at

correct answer)

- Evaluative feedback and constructive criticism of school work
- Academically oriented teacher role definitions (i.e., lower expectations are associated with the belief that social control or other non-academic goals are the appropriate teacher objectives) (Brookover and others)

Improving the Climate for Learning

High expectations need not start or stop at the classroom door. In fact, the tone is easier to sustain if present all day long. For instance, one successful principal profiled by Jo Ann Mazzarella improved learning climate in a school by becoming accessible to students, speaking to them in the cafeteria and during sporting events. Together with having vigorous material support for instruction and strong expectations for student performance, this principal set the tone of accessible adult authority for the school:

> My strategy was this: if I can get a thousand kids and mold and sway their attitudes, their feelings about the school, and their feelings about me as an adult authority figure representative of all the other adult authority figures in the school, if I can set a tone with them, it's going to make things a lot easier for every teacher in every class they teach. I've done that in the four high schools I've been in and it's worked every time.

He mounted a successful campaign to reduce noise and eliminate trash in the school commons area, banning radios without earphones and urging students to pick up their trash. According to one teacher, he changed the climate for academics by getting students to realize that the school was also their responsibility.

Indeed, the key to improving learning climate and expectations may well be in impressing upon everyone—students, teachers, parents, and staff—that there is a close link between daily activities and student achievement. If faculty make disparaging remarks about students or their families, if they reward or praise sloppy work, or if they reward inappropriate behavior, then the learning climate is affected and expectations are diminished.

To reverse a negative learning climate, then, or to maintain an excellent one, an instructional leader has three tasks, according to Brookover and colleagues:

1. raise teacher expectations of students
2. communicate high expectations to all students
3. establish an instructional program that requires a mastery of objectives and also supports it

There are undoubtedly many ways the instructional leader can bring about each of these goals. For example, principals can share positive achievement data with teachers. Sharing good news about effectiveness in one area can have a "ripple effect," motivating teachers to increase effectiveness in other areas, as well. Ultimately, the good news can affect student achievement, too, by conditioning teachers to expect good performances in formerly successful areas.

Rewards and Recognition

Both teachers and students respond to the common symbols that tie the school together. Leaders are symbol managers: they orchestrate the rituals that express the values of the school community. Symbols such as rewards for academic excellence—honor rolls, citations, and academic contests such as "college bowls"—make visible the underlying values in a school. "Learning is important here," they say, "and we recognize students who learn well." They may also raise the level of camaraderie around academic pursuits, making schoolwork a competition that involves preparation and performance in a group as well as alone.

Rewards and recognition not only add to motivation; they also enhance the sense of common effort that lightens the work of learning and teaching. Teachers working in less-effective schools have been found to speak seldom of their work or the school with enthusiasm. William L. Rutherford described the environment in such schools as "placid and nonthreatening": "It placed few demands on teachers, but it was also ambiguous and without rewards." Students, too, have been found to suffer the same malaise of vague expectations and indifference.

Protecting Time for Learning

Another way to improve a school's instructional climate is to increase the amount of time devoted to instruction. Studies show that time-on-task is highly related to achievement. The more time students spend on learning, the better the outcomes. Students also gain more interest in subjects and a better attitude toward learning when they maximize time-on-task. And just as learning is affected by time-on-task, so time-on-task depends on the quality of available time. It is important to note that the key word here is *quality*. Students can learn rapidly when the quality of instruction is good and when they are ready for what they are learning.

But we must be careful here not to oversimplify the research findings. As Lorin W. Anderson observes, it is wrong to focus only on the "time" factor and ignore the "on-task" part. Simply providing more time for instruction will probably not raise achievement scores. The use of time—that is, the quality of the time spent on instructional activities—must also improve. Indeed, some of the factors affecting the quality of instructional time are ways of improving the environment for instruction.

In a study of eight secondary schools, Jane A. Stallings and Georgea

G. Mohlman found that learning climate, including quality of instructional time, was affected by student behaviors, teacher attitudes, school policy, and principal leadership. In schools where policies regarding absences and tardiness were clear, well communicated, collaboratively made, and consistently enforced, students were more likely to learn and stay on task. Furthermore, teacher morale was higher. Where there were frequent interruptions during class periods, fewer students were on task, more students misbehaved, and more students were absent. Interruptions can be produced by tardy students or by P. A. systems. Where principals were seen as more respectful and supportive of instruction, teachers were more involved in their work and students in theirs.

Thus, increasing available instructional time must also be coupled with providing an environment that encourages concentration and attention to instruction.

Observing Teachers

The direct observation of teachers by principals is high on just about everyone's list of effective instructional leadership methods. In fact, research suggests that, when done well, observation and feedback are among the best forms of instructional management. In one study, principals themselves listed classroom observation as the second most effective strategy for improving instruction (ranked only after shared leadership for teachers) (Barbara Guzzetti and Michael Martin). But in practice, principals do not spend much time working directly with teachers on instruction, as Van Cleve Morris and his colleagues found in a three-year study of twenty-four principals. It appears, then, that meaningful teacher observation is more praised than practiced.

Considering the time principals must devote to observations to give them some validity and the potential impact of observation on principal-teacher relationships, it is not surprising that in some schools observations occur only infrequently and, when done at all, are cursory. The issues surrounding a commitment to a teacher observation program go to the heart of the problems of teaching and learning.

Keith Acheson says that observers and evaluators of teachers must have knowledge and skills in three areas. The first area, intelligent *planning*, requires a knowledge of strategies, research, and subject matter, as well as knowledge of the personality and characteristics of individual teachers. The second skill is recording *useful data* about teachers' performances. This is really a matter of being unobtrusive and knowing what to look for. Finally, the instructional leader must give helpful, *collegial feedback*. Like most adults, teachers respond best to reasoning from experience and to a concern with the problems in their daily activities. The instructional leader, then, seems to operate best as a facilitator of collegiality, setting the tone for continuous improvement of instruction rather than making prescriptions for ills.

Effective Observation Practices

Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little found five issues that separate valuable observation practices from those that were without purpose. Effective observation occurs in an environment in which there is agreement on five points: (1) the positive value of observation, (2) its place in the organization, (3) its nature and relevance for teachers, (4) the professional norms that it may strain, and (5) the time constraints on adequate observations.

Bird and Little found that the value accorded to observation differed markedly among the schools studied. Two of the schools allotted time for observation and feedback even though doing so meant taking time away from other activities the principals could be involved in. Establishing observation as a priority seemed to be a constant struggle. They noted one assistant principal who delayed all his observations for a semester because he had to design new student identification cards. In another school, principals were spending time policing the halls for smokers after the school board closed the student smoking area, which necessitated abandoning a well-planned observation schedule.

In addition to improving teacher performance, observations can be psychologically and socially beneficial as well. One such benefit may be giving teachers a sense of excitement about performing work that matters. Observations may also have professional rewards (as in advancement, recognition, or collegiality) or bureaucratic consequences. Moreover, observations can reflect on the administrators, as well. For instance, observations range from dropping in and out of classrooms to a systematic, structured supervision requiring followup and regular interaction between teachers and observers. The methods of observation reflect the administrators' views of their roles in supporting the work of the teachers.

The Organization of Observations

A second cluster of interrelated issues surrounds the organization of observations: the number of teachers observed in a semester, the frequency of observations, and the duration of the observations. In fact, as Bird and Little point out, observations may severely reduce the time administrators have to devote to other activities. Teachers told them that they begin to have faith in an observer's understanding of their teaching only after four visits.

Of course, there are risks involved with observations that are too infrequent, too cursory, or too long. Infrequent observations leave too much to rumor about expected kinds of instruction. Too many classroom observations in a day—ten, for instance—can take a toll on a principal's attention and reduce their value for improving a teacher's performance. Although a principal's "visibility" is a virtue touted by school effectiveness research, it has to be balanced against effectiveness. Finally, the length of an observer's stay in a classroom might raise an issue of appropriateness—of "what's right and what's rude." The "right" length of an observation may depend on a particular school's culture: whether staying for an entire period or observing for two days in a row may call for special explanations to a teacher.

Because a teacher's faith in observations rests heavily on the criteria and procedures the observer uses to analyze teaching, observers should attempt to increase teachers' knowledge, confidence, skill, or professionalism. Apparently, the more frequently teachers are observed, the better use they can make of criticism. Bird and Little have found that teachers who are observed frequently make use of feedback even about clumsy performances as well as about those that are more polished. They develop a "thick skin" for criticism and often request observations during difficult class times if they believe they can learn from the observation. "I wish there were more observations," commented one teacher, reflecting the helpfulness of the observer: "This semester I'm trying out a new unit on heroes with a lot of team learning. I so wanted him here when I tried it out. He tried but he couldn't make it. But if he does give you time you know it's going to be quality time" (Bird and Little).

The Need for Reciprocity

Finally, Bird and Little point out the most sensitive issue in teacher observation—the problem of establishing reciprocal professional relations. It is problematic—and crucial—because nearly all the approaches to observation can be futile if a teacher does not sense a principal's respect, or even deference, for their own professional abilities. Putting the emphasis of an observation on performance, rather than personality, allows a teacher to feel that the principal believes in his or her capacity to improve.

Similarly, teachers must be able to trust their instructional leaders in at least three ways if the benefits of direct observation are to be maintained: first, they must believe that their observers intend no harm to them; second, that the criteria and procedures of evaluation are predictable and open; and third, that observers will provide information to improve the nuts-and-bolts of their teaching.

Resistance to the third area of trust may be psychological in nature, stemming from a belief that the observer's only real purpose is to criticize. Observations have the potential for becoming a glib sidewalk superintendency, with the observer feeling little or no responsibility and taking few risks themselves. At its worst, observation can actually erode the collegiality and norms of excellence that it was meant to fortify.

The observers who praise but fail to offer constructive criticism, or who criticize without analysis, are also sending the message to teachers that their feedback is formulaic, remote, and uninterested in developing the teacher's potential; they may even lack an understanding of the realities of teaching.

Bird and Little, who noticed these tendencies in the schools they observed, propose a five-point requirement of reciprocity that is designed to offset some of the vulnerability teachers experience during observation by setting high standards for observers.

- First, the observer must promise to bring knowledge and skill to the observation in order to help the practitioner. At the least, the observer must promise that "I can make and report to you (the teacher) a description of your lesson which will shed new light on your practices and thus help you to improve them."
- The teacher, in turn, must defer to the observer's assertion—in effect, validating the observation process as a valuable instrument for improving his or her teaching. He or she must listen carefully and actively.
- To warrant his or her authority, the observer must display knowledge and skills a teacher can use: making a detailed, revealing record of the observation for the teacher, or offering feasible alternatives to the teacher's practices. This may involve requiring that written praise of classroom teaching be as specific and detailed as written criticism, or that teachers be able on occasion to observe those who observe them.
- Next, the teacher must try to change his or her practices in some significant way: in behavior, use of materials, approach to students, or perspectives.
- Finally, the observer must try to improve along with the teachers, with training, practice, and observation of the interactions with teachers.

According to Bird and Little, the basis of reciprocity in observation lies in the principle that "observation cannot be simpler than the teaching it supports." Obviously, efforts to improve the complex art of teaching are ongoing, requiring incremental improvements and starting with modest efforts at which both teachers and observer can succeed. Future observations can then build upon those successes.

The focus in an instructional leader's observation practices, then, must be on the problems and needs of the teachers. Using patterns of joint planning and shared responsibility, teachers can be influenced by an observer toward high standards. The potential for observation is great: for influencing higher expectations in instruction and, by extension, motivated outcomes in students.

Assessing the Instructional Program

Another task of instructional leaders is to assess and revise the instructional program. As in the case of supervising and evaluating teachers, whole programs can be reviewed for planning, objectives, success in reaching the objectives, and particular successes and problems. Ultimately, the success of any educational program comes down to the performance of the students: Are they reaching the objectives proposed? Where are they failing and why? The more specifically learning problems can be identified, the more successfully they can be remedied or traced to particular objectives, units, or course activities.

Of course, students in any given level of education attain varying degrees of mastery. In any class, a certain number will grasp some concepts and not others. Schools are now under increasing pressure to raise the level of mastery. They are being held accountable for a minimum number of competencies and are being publicly compared on the basis of standardized test scores. It is imperative, then, that principals and teachers decide which objectives are essential and how best to teach them. Program assessment involves ways of following up the results of the instructional planning and teaching in a school.

For principals and other instructional leaders, the educational literature agrees, the assessment of achievement is not just fine-tuning an existing instructional program. It is an integral part of the instructional planning process.

Stages of Evaluation

Individual courses and whole programs can be monitored in similar ways. Evaluations of both can be divided into three stages: before the course or program, during the course or program, and afterwards. The precourse evaluation can be called *diagnostic*; the evaluation as the course proceeds is *formative*; and the final evaluation is *summative*.

Although many principals may perform one or two of these evaluations, few actually perform all three. When program evaluation is discussed, thoughts usually turn to summative (year's end) evaluations. But the instructional process in a school may remain a mystery if achievement data are reviewed only at the end of the year. "What happened here?" principals have been overheard muttering, uncertain how to connect statistical surprises in test scores with instructional strategies, learning climates, or other variables in their schools' instructional environments. To understand the outcomes, an observer must look back at formative (midcourse) testing of the particular objectives in each department and even the performances in classrooms.

Matching Objectives and Activities

The *intended* curriculum is embodied in objectives: what ought to be taught. Principals and other leaders can monitor the worth and nature of planned activities to see how they match the general program objectives and how they fit with each other. We have already addressed the subject of goals, which are best regarded as the long-range, broader aims of schools or programs. "Every child up to grade-level standards" or "providing students an adequate reading-base to develop writing skills" may be two goals. Objectives, though, are the short-term aims that break down the goals into specific steps, each of which can be attained in a finite period. Stated in this way, it is clear that objectives not related to goals may be trivial or, even worse, confusing to students.

Although much discussion has centered on the semantics of behavioral objectives, wording is probably less important to a monitor than is the ability to find evidence of whether the objectives are being met. Well-written objectives specify the range of evidence appropriate to judging their success. The objective "to develop in students an understanding of the basic principles of algebra," for instance, could be rewritten to limit what the "basic principles" are: "Students will demonstrate their understanding of the number system and of basic concepts of sets."

In some situations, specifying the degree of understanding could also be appropriate: "Students will pass parts 1 and 2 of the departmental competency exam in algebra." In other situations, however, using a common test for evidence of understanding could be inappropriate. In teaching ethics, for instance, the quality of reasoning rather than the accuracy of response is clearly more vital; hence monitoring in values-education could adopt other kinds of evidence.

Attributes of useful objectives are as helpful for monitoring as for constructing programs. In W. James Popham's work on sound objectives, the capacity for monitoring the objectives is built into the objectives themselves. He suggests that objectives should clarify the instructional intention, describe a generalizable class of learner behaviors, have criteria for adequately judging students' constructed responses, incorporate the important conditions associated with the objectives inside the objectives themselves (such as academic prerequisites or vital materials), and have well-defined performance standards.

Sources of Data and Methods of Analysis

How can the instructional leader tell, then, whether objectives are being met? Answering this question is not as simple as just looking at the outcomes of teaching—that is, at test scores and the level of satisfaction—though those sorts of evidence are extremely important. Analysis of curriculum implementation must precede outcome analysis. Is the curriculum being run as intended? Is it coordinated and monitored at the classroom level? Program analysis includes testing of materials, spoken content, classroom activities, and the other ways of reaching program objectives. In other words, formative monitoring of programs is as important as summative monitoring.

Polling teachers for their perceptions of a program's strong and weak areas can contribute important information to an instructional leader. A mixture of formal and informal techniques can be used to keep in touch with teachers' concerns. A "concerns screen" is a formalized method of organizing teachers' progress and perceptions into patterns. One example of this sort of opinion-sampling, offered by Susan Loucks-Horsley and M. Melle, probes the faculty's success at integrating program objectives and resources into their classroom practices. The summary sheet in table 1 provides a scorable record, easily filled out and tabulated.

Table 1. Sample Building Summary Sheet

	Outside Intended Program 1	*Getting a Good Start* 2	*Well on the Way* 3	4	*Best Practices Working* 5
1. Time is devoted to science	*** **	*	**	*	**
2. Science is taught according to R-1 Guide	*** ***	*** **			
3. Assessment of pupil learning	*** ***	*** **			
4. Integration of basic skills	*	***** ****	*		
5. The outdoor classroom is used as recommended		*** **	*** *	**	
6. Recommended materials, equipment, and media are available			*** **	*** *	**
7. Inservicing and financial arrangements have been made		*	*** **	*** **	
8. Long and short range planning		***	*** ***	**	
9. Use of class time	**	**	****	**	*
10. Teacher-pupil interaction facilitates progam	***	****	****		
11. Classroom environment facilitates program		***	***	***	**
12. Instruction is sequenced to facilitate the guided inquiry learning approach	**	**** *	****		

School: Winter Elementary. Teachers: All grade 3, 4, 5, 6 teachers * = one teacher

Source: Loucks-Horsely and Melle (1982). Reprinted by permission of S. Loucks-Horsely.

Content Analysis

Much of the information available for program monitoring is found in documentary artifacts of teaching. A highly adaptable technique for mining these materials for evidence of a program's success has been called *content analysis*. This is a broad term for a critical analysis of teaching materials, reducing their complex ideas to lists, matrices, and other skeletal forms in answer to a leader's questions. For instance, a principal might want to look at a textbook in introductory chemistry classes to determine how usable it is. Some of the questions the principal could pose would be about the book's readability, its questions at the end of chapters or units, and its suitability for the teaching methods used in the school.

The principal would probably also want other tools to help perform the content analysis: readability formulas, for instance, to assess the reading-difficulty level; a taxonomy of educational objectives, such as Bloom's taxonomy, to investigate the questions in the chapters; and evaluation notes to match textbooks to teachers. Materials other than textbooks can be analyzed, of course. The contents of tests are fair game, as are job descriptions, state educational plans, or minutes of the meetings of parent-teacher associations.

Curriculum Mapping

An offshoot of content analysis, *curriculum mapping* combines the analysis of intended curriculum goals with the analysis of actual teaching patterns. It is intended to fill the gap that often exists between the intended and the actual curricula. Because of the loose coupling in the organization of schools, there may be no warning to teachers that their priorities in the course content and allotted time differ from those required to meet program objectives. By the time test scores begin to slide, it may be impossible to recoordinate a program.

A curriculum map records what is being taught at each grade level and sublevel, as well as what might be taught. Fenwick English provides an example of a curriculum map, reproduced in table 2, that differentiates the various topics in the science curriculum in one school system, divided by grades and marked by total time devoted to each topic.

Using a curriculum map, an instructional leader can see the breadth of the curriculum and its actual time priorities. In the table, the science curriculum appears to orbit around four topics: magnetism, nutrition, solar systems, and the human body. A map such as this one can provide a base upon which to decide new curriculum approaches. For instance, a decision may be made to include "optical illusions" in the science curriculum, since it is not being done now.

Long-Term Commitment

The commitment to use achievement data in the instructional program

Table 2. Curriculum Mapping: Analysis of Data—Science Curriculum of Shady Grove Public Schools

TOPIC	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	*Total Time by Topic*
1. Simple Machines	I/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
2. Work and energy	0	I/1	R/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/1	3.0
3. Locomotion	I/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/.2	1.2
4. Insects	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
5. Magnetism	0	I/1	R/1	E/1	0	0	E/1	0	0	R/1	0	R/.5	E/.2	5.7
6. Weather	I/.5	0	0	E/1	0	0	0	0	E/.5	0	0	0	0	2.0
7. Kinetics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/2	E/1	3.0
8. Temperature	I/.5	R/1	R/1	0	0	0	0	E/.5	0	0	0	0	0	3.0
9. Nutrition	I/.5	0	0	0	R/1	R/1	0	E/.5	0	0	E/2	0	0	5.0
10. Sex differences	I/.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/2	0	0	2.1
11. Ecology	I/.1	R/.1	R/.1	R/.1	R/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.4
12. Solar system	0	I/1	R/1	E/1	E/1	0	0	0	E/1	0	0	0	0	5.0
13. Gravity	0	0	0	I/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/.1	1.1
14. Radioactive dating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/.5	0	0	0	E/.1	.6
15. Volume and mass	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/2	0	0	0	2.0
16. Bonding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/.1	.1
17. Human body	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	E/1	E/1	0	0	E/2	0	0	5.0
18. Cells	0	0	0	0	0	I/.1	E/.2	E/.5	0	0	E/.5	0	0	1.3
18. Plants	0	0	0	R/1	0	R/1	E/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.0
20. Tobacco and drugs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E/1	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
21. Atom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	0	0	I/.2	1.2
22. Friction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	0	0	0	E/.1	1.1
23. Optical Illusions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
24. Waves	0	0	0	0	I/.2	0	0	0	E/.5	0	0	0	R/.1	.8
25. Quantum theory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	I/1	1.0
TOTAL TIME BY GRADE	3.7	4.1	4.1	5.1	3.2	4.1	3.2	3.5	3.5	4.0	6.5	2.5	4.1	

Legend: I=introduced; R=reinforced; E=expanded　　Time Delineation: number equals hours per week per semester

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is a long-term one. Indeed, it should be, as the collection of data will begin to pay off most only after an initial year or two. The first year can be a baseline year, during which information is compiled on each curricular group of students (age-groups, for instance, or career tracks). The groups of the first year, then, can be compared with those of later years.

Based on the findings of the first-year evaluation, objectives can be set for the following years' students. These objectives will take into account the differences in aptitudes or entering achievement levels between this year's students and those of previous years. Each year can be compared similarly, helping the staff evaluate the effectiveness, appropriateness, and value of each program or of key courses.

One of the most important uses of assessments is for the public recognition of success. Assessing means not only being able to improve programs but also being able to celebrate them—to reward the hard work and positive attitudes that produce high achievement. Rewards can also emphasize to students and staff the importance of doing well academically. Rewards can be bringing in outstanding speakers for the National Honor Society or arranging with local organizations to honor students who succeed academically. A principal's personal recognition of a faculty member's excellence or of the whole faculty for hard work and achievement can improve morale and stimulate better efforts in the future.

Sharing Instructional Leadership

Unaddressed so far is the question of who instructional leaders are. Although the principal is commonly assumed to be *the* instructional leader, a closer look at schools reveals that leadership is not any one person's prerogative. To those who know a principal's wide range of responsibilities, the need for sharing leadership is all too clear.

Even principals who put a high priority on instructional leadership find that, despite their good intentions, little of their workday may actually be spent handling matters directly related to teaching and learning. Bruce Howell found that, at best, elementary principals devote about 30 percent of their time to instructional leadership duties, while secondary principals devote only 20 percent to instruction.

A Neglected Activity

The question, then, is how to work instructional leadership into a principal's day. The danger—one that few principals will risk—is that they will neglect the noninstructional demands only to find that their school leadership role is neglected. In fact, certain management duties are essential to instructional leadership. To be good instructional leaders, principals must manage the nonclassroom activities that create a positive learning climate for learners and teachers. One of the major duties of instructional leaders, according to recent reports, is to maximize instructional time by minimizing the number of classroom interruptions and by running interference between teachers and parents or district office. Principals may be more effective leaders by managing school business in order to smooth the way for classroom achievement.

Besides having important duties other than classroom supervision, principals might also suffer from a superman or superwoman complex—the belief that they need to do everything equally well. Unfortunately, with too little time or background to perform adequately all the necessary tasks of leadership, this complex may result in a principal doing everything equally poorly.

Clearly, it is preferable that a principal's duties—whether instruction-related or management-related—be shared, not abandoned. In most schools, other administrative staff, department heads, teachers, or outside consultants are available to share instructional leadership. Sometimes these people may even be better qualified. A department head, for example, is probably more familiar than the principal with effective teaching techniques or appropriate content area goals. A wise principal could use the leadership position of a department head, then, for goal-setting and teacher supervision. The principal would then be the primary goal-setter and supervisor, collaborating with and overseeing the leadership exercised by department heads.

Perhaps, as Caroline Persell argues, too much research and public discussion of instructional leadership has emphasized the principal's duties, neglecting the *unofficial* leadership in schools. Principals, she points out, cannot—and most do not—expect their plans to be instituted without alteration or interpretation by teachers and staff.

Norman Newberg and Allan Glatthorn noticed this sort of unofficial shared leadership in the junior high schools they studied. They found that instructional leadership was spread out among a variety of people rather than centralized in the principal. Like other researchers, such as Russell Gersten and his colleagues and William Firestone and Robert Herriott, they found that secondary schools generate instructional leaders among the staff more frequently than do elementary schools, where leadership tends to be centralized in the principal. In two of the junior high schools Newberg and Glatthorn studied, the reading chairpersons seemed to play an influential part; in another, the English Department chair was the key leader; and in a third school, a vice principal was the most important instructional force.

The key to effective instructional leadership may very well lie, first, in the flexibility a principal exhibits in sharing leadership duties, and, second, in the clarity with which a principal matches leadership duties with individuals who can perform them collaboratively. In sharing instructional leadership, then, the principal needs to know what tasks need to be shared and just how much guidance he or she should provide. To address these matters, let us look first at the critical leadership functions researchers have found in schools, then at the balance between sharing and delegating.

Critical Leadership Functions

In their study of instructional leadership in urban districts, Gersten and colleagues found that principals assume little of the instructional leadership in some districts. Most guidance for teachers, for instance, comes from trained supervisors and consultants. In answering why principals were not more involved, the researchers concluded that schools have sets of leadership duties—responsibilities that need to be done—regardless of anyone's job descriptions. These *critical functions* are necessary to maintaining and improving instructional programs.

An educational change program in a large urban district was successful, Gersten and his colleagues found, despite the indifference or opposition of the principals involved. The key to the program's success was the daily down-to-earth technical assistance given to teachers on classroom matters. Other research, too, has indicated that federally funded programs may be successful without much support from administrators and that successful programs are not dependent upon consistent administrative policies (See Gersten and others, who cited additional sources).

Giving teachers access to technical assistance with their classroom problems is one of four critical functions vital to the health of instructional programs, say Gersten and his colleagues. The other three critical functions are as follows:

1. specific inservice training of teachers on classroom issues, with extended followup
2. an educational model that succeeds with difficult-to-teach children
3. a system for monitoring student and teacher performance

Clearly, none of these vital activities can be shouldered entirely by a principal. In practice, they are carried out by a variety of teachers and staff with a range of expertise—reading coordinators, parent groups, department heads, school-level committees, or staff consultants.

Classroom teachers, it is generally recognized, do not look to administrators first for help in solving classroom problems. They perceive administrators as too far removed from daily teaching difficulties to offer much real help. According to Roland Barth, teachers are concerned with the *means* of instruction in most of their work with students. The critical functions of instructional leadership are actually the specific support teachers need to solve classroom problems.

Those critical leadership functions that the principal does not control directly he or she must, of course, oversee. In fact, in shared leadership arrangements, one of the most important tasks of the principal is to make sure that the critical functions are being performed.

Just what are some of these critical functions? A list of some primary leadership functions appears in table 3. Of the functions listed, some relate to guiding teachers, others to improving or maintaining high standards in students'

Table 3. Some Critical Functions of Instructional Leadership

Teachers

Supervision
- Observing classroom performance
- Providing feedback on instructional skills
- Giving direction and support for individual teachers to eliminate poor teaching performance

Providing Inservice Training
- Arranging for instructional-technique inservices
- Collaborating with staff on inservice needs and offerings
- Attending or being briefed about inservice sessions
- Planning a general staff development program

Evaluating Teachers
- Scheduling conferences before and after classroom observations
- Providing teachers guidance to analyze their own instructional processes
- Focusing on improving teaching rather than condemning teachers' habits or personalities
- Concentrating on issues "small in number, educationally vital, intellectually accessible to the teacher, and amenable to change" (Acheson and Gall)
- Bringing in specific observations rather than general judgments
- Evaluating supervisors' techniques on the same bases used to evaluate teachers

Selecting Teachers
- Contacting all references
- Observing and having others observe teaching of job candidates and new teachers
- Hiring different types of staff to reach all students
- Following up new hirings with support and development opportunities

Protecting Instructional Time and Teacher Integrity
- Supporting teachers' professional decisions and needs
- Eliminating disruptive "official" interruptions in class time over public address systems or inclass announcements

Students

Setting and Monitoring Schoolwide Academic Standards
- Establishing academic requirements, consistent with and exceeding district guidelines
- Publicizing by word and print the high expectations of the school
- Providing counseling programs that challenge students
- Encouraging the use of standardized testing for improving academic performance

(Continued)

Table 3 *(Continued)*

- Keeping test results available for teachers' reference and goal-setting

Limiting Class Size and Controlling Class Composition

- Assigning students to teachers on the basis of factors that may affect learning
- Experimenting with multi-age grouping
- Avoiding "typing" students socially as the basis for assigning classes

Content

Overseeing and Facilitating Selection of Teaching Materials

- Matching objectives and materials
- Filling instructional priority areas fairly
- Helping teachers develop materials not commercially available

Balancing Specific Program Objectives with Overall School Goals

- Ensuring scope and sequence in school instructional program by forming scope-and-sequence guidelines and checking department programs for consistency with guidelines

Helping Teachers and Students in Being Aware of School's Curricula

Planning Collaboratively

- Staffing committees with various viewpoints
- Expecting staff input on materials selection and evaluation

(Besides the three domains discussed above, a general category affecting all areas of a school's academic life can also be shared. The following critical functions are clearly of major concern to everyone involved in the academic program of a school.)

General Instruction

Providing Rewards and Recognition for Teaching and Learning Achievements

- Setting up ongoing systems for recognizing academic success, such as honor rolls, awards, or letters to students' parents
- Facilitating peer-group emotional support and incentives for teachers

Setting High Expectations and Clear Goals for Student and Teacher Performances

- Requiring yearly instructional goals for each teacher
- Establishing policy on student promotion
- Analyzing achievement test scores to find general strengths and weaknesses in programs
- Maintaining order and a pleasant environment to teach and learn
- Establishing and enforcing a clear code of conduct on attendance
- Enforcing discipline personally with students
- Refusing to stereotype students
- Assigning staff and resources to confront the violation of rules
- Clarifying policies personally or in writing

work, and a third group to curriculum supervision. These three domains of instructional leadership include activities that may be shared and those that are finally the responsibility of the principal.

Supervision and evaluation of teachers, for instance, are ultimately the principal's duty. But it is possible to divide them, as Acheson and Smith propose, so that some supervisory duties (classroom observation, for instance) are performed by others, though coordinated and overseen by the principal; the final evaluations are the principal's task. That is, the formative tasks of teacher supervision may be shared, but the summative tasks are the responsibility of the principal and school authorities above the principal.

The activities in the four categories in the table (teachers, students, content, and general instruction) are neither the principal's unique responsibility nor entirely someone else's. The principal can share many of them, retaining the authority to oversee how they are being done. The domains, of course, are interactive: increasing students' time on task, for instance, may best be furthered by protecting classroom time for instruction or by advancing standards in departments and classrooms. Sharing these tasks will only increase the likelihood that the areas of instructional leadership covered here will be mutually supportive and integrated into a school's working environment.

Defining Roles When Leadership Is Shared

The fact that the buck stops with the principal raises issues about potential troubles with role definitions in shared leadership. It may be hard to introduce collegial leadership to faculties used to centralized authority. Some studies of instructional leadership, such as those by Ronald Edmonds and by Shirley Jackson and others, have stressed that principals need to be assertive leaders. According to Edmonds, principals in schools that are improving tend to emphasize discipline and assume more responsibility for achieving basic school objectives. Principals in declining schools, on the other hand, tend to be permissive, emphasizing informal or collegial relationships with teachers.

These findings have been commonly interpreted to mean that principals should centralize authority in themselves. Edmonds' study also shows, however, that the problems in declining schools seemed to arise from a general lack of commitment to goals and a lack of accountability from teachers and administrators. It was harder to draw conclusions about the presence (or absence) of a particular leadership style. Thus, if shared leadership is to work successfully, it appears that everyone—faculty and administrative staff alike—must know their instructional goals and must also be accountable for students' achievement.

In short, collegial leadership should not do away with the lines of authority and accountability in a school. Unless the boundaries of teachers' duties as leaders are spelled out clearly, for instance, some may assume they have the authority to make decisions the principal would prefer to have. Furthermore, total-group decision-making tends to be overused in schools, according to James Lipham. In the early stages of a change process, he observes, wide participation is appropriate. But during the time new programs are implemented, the lines of authority should be clearly defined.

Encouraging Norms of Sharing

What about the schools that simply seem to resist shared leadership? Much depends upon the experience of teachers in a school—how principals have managed instructional programs in the past, for instance—or on the degree of openness in a school. Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little found that norms about privacy vary from school to school. At schools where privacy is valued, repeated teacher observations may meet with disapproval, and there is usually less sharing of information and techniques among teachers. At these schools, there is also often less tolerance for shared leadership. Teachers may resist department heads making classroom observations, for example, or wielding power over their curriculum.

Bird and Little also discovered, however, that faculties who resisted shared leadership arrangements also had principals who avoided instructional support programs or who did not encourage experimentation in instructional techniques. Where schools had established a precedent of sharing improvement strategies among teachers or where principals were actively involved in staff development, faculties were more open to shared leadership. This finding makes sense: an atmosphere that encourages continuous improvement would also encourage emerging leaders among the faculty and sharing of critical functions. With a strong principal coordinating instructional support, such an environment could also encourage cooperation among teachers.

In coordinating leadership energies, the principal may benefit from carefully organizing the school staff to define clearly the leadership roles that need to be filled. Clarifying instructional leadership duties may mean reorganizing the school's administrative staff.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered several areas of instructional leadership that have recently received attention: the major contexts of the school and the community; the "technology" of instruction affected by instructional leaders (goal identification, curriculum and instructional management, learning climate, classroom observation, and assessment); and the possibilities for shared or team efforts. These are only a few of the areas related to instructional leadership, but they are vital in focusing attention on *leadership in context*: on actual instructional leaders rather than on "symbolic" instructional leaders.

Perhaps most definitions of instructional leadership are so general because it is difficult to define a personal commitment in its full range. Instructional leadership involves a leader's commitment to maintaining excellence and improving the less desirable features of instruction in his or her school. Nevertheless, if it is to exist at all, a commitment must move from the stage of making symbolic acts to maintaining a working routine.

The research is unanimous in asserting that principals can have profound indirect effects on students' learning experiences. A principal's impact can be seen in the school's climate, in the motivation and goal clarity among teachers, and in teachers' expectations for students. The indirectness of the principal's role ("Can I really make a difference?") should not discourage anyone from trying to create a daily routine that includes goal-oriented attention to instructional matters.

No matter how centralized the principal's leadership role in a school, it is difficult for his or her influence to be felt directly in the classroom. A practical role for principals, then, is in being an agent of instructional support and an overseer of support functions. Principals can take advantage of the network of experienced or motivated people who make up the faculty and staff to provide direct, perceptive leadership of instruction in hard-to-reach areas of instruction. Depending on the school's culture, others in the school—department heads, assistant principals, or teacher committees—may participate in the planning, observing, training, delegating, testing, and summarizing necessary to provide an active, self-correcting learning environment.

This approach does not mean that principals (or other administrators) should be eager to delegate all instructional leadership roles to others. It does mean, however, that principals can meet the demands for instructional leadership by attempting to identify and meet those needs vital to improving student performances. In addition, sharing leadership may mean involving a whole faculty in a pursuit of excellence in learning—a pursuit that can be contagious.

Chapter 10

Leading the Instructional Staff

Mary Cihak Jensen

It came as little surprise when researchers singled out instructional leadership as a key to determining the effectiveness of a school. The quality of any school, after all, depends more upon the quality of its instruction than upon any other factor. Administrators who dedicate the majority of their time and energy to finding, developing, and working collaboratively with their instructional staffs tend to find themselves one day with effective schools.

This chapter considers the recruitment, selection, induction, evaluation/supervision, dismissal, and professional development of teachers. It summarizes research and practical wisdom on these topics and offers suggestions to administrators who intend to successfully lead their instructional staffs.

Recruiting Teachers

Recruiting and selecting teachers may be the most critical task school administrators face. Each time a teacher is hired, the local school and its district have an opportunity to improve instructional programs. Yet, like many other opportunities, this one is fraught with perils as well as possibilities.

Mistakes made in teacher selection are costly and have long-term effects. Estimating that 5 percent of teachers currently employed in United States public schools could be considered incompetent, Edwin M. Bridges warns that the history of inadequate teachers will repeat itself unless better recruitment and selection procedures are devised. He recommends concentrating district resources on the selection, evaluation, and development of probationary teachers.

Competition in the Marketplace

The teacher marketplace is increasingly competitive. Schools that are able to offer employees higher wages and pleasant working and living conditions may attract a large pool of qualified applicants. Districts that are unable to offer these incentives—especially those in urban and isolated rural areas—may find it difficult to attract competent teachers. In most regions of the country, filling vacancies in math, science, foreign language, and special education can be particularly difficult.

Competition among districts in the teacher marketplace has qualitative as well as quantitative dimensions. Schools that seek qualified personnel are hampered in their search by national problems of inadequate academic standards and teacher preparation. Historically, college students who major in education have been, as a group, less academically able than most other college students. Even though there is some evidence that the trend may be reversing, there are still many academically unqualified individuals in the national pool of applicants. Therefore, administrators need strategies that will increase their chances of finding the most qualified candidates.

Aggressive Recruiting

Districts intent on hiring the best teachers develop policies as well as budgets to express their commitment. Abandoning any traditional recruiting season, they instead develop applicant pools year-round, monitoring their candidates with efficient computer systems.

Having a large pool of applicants to select from increases a school's chances of finding a teacher who is well qualified both academically and personally. To attract a large number of applicants, school leaders need to "get there first." Successful recruiters are ready to "sell" their schools: they advertise widely and seek candidates on college campuses or at regional recruitment conventions. In some states, both innercity and rural districts attract applicants by promising benefits ranging from bonuses to relocation services to reductions in rent. These incentives, usually offered in cooperation with the local business community, demonstrate respect and support for the accomplished professional. These indications of support are likely to be as important as the material incentives themselves.

One superintendent-principal of a rural school sees recruitment as a combination of search, salesmanship, and followup. Her search is enhanced by the relationships she maintains with university placement officers and with student teacher supervisors. "They know me and they know my school," she says. They also know by now that she wants and gets top candidates. Seven years ago, she had six applicants for a teaching position; after energetic recruitment at the universities she now considers up to sixty applicants for each position.

Her efforts don't stop there: she considers the interview an opportunity to sell her school to valued contenders. She thanks them for their time, offers a tour of the school, coffee or tea, and her finest salesmanship. Many exceptional teachers recruited through this process say her school was the only one that revealed so much about its programs during the interview, the only one that made a concerted effort to learn of applicants' interests and needs.

When this carefully designed process is used, more than one candidate typically emerges as exceptional. To demonstrate her interest in top candidates, this school leader includes followup in the process:

> Sometimes the top three candidates are so close it's nearly a flip of the coin. I don't want to lose the other two. I follow them for some

> time, sending Christmas cards, for instance, letting them know we are still interested in them. If a single element in their background discouraged me about them, I tell them. If they have a weak preparation in mathematics, for example, I recommend additional courses.

Energy and candor have brought a constant stream of candidates to this rural school. In this, as in other successful recruitment campaigns, teachers are attracted to the personality of both the recruiter and the school.

Recruitment is tightly linked to other factors of educational leadership. Schools that offer a professional environment—manageable class size, supportive inservice, staff collegiality and cohesion—attract and keep qualified teachers. Districts that provide supportive yet stimulating work environments and communities that welcome the educator will find teachers when others will not.

Recruiting Minority Teachers

Finding minorities to fill teaching positions presents an even greater challenge. Obtaining credentialed minority teachers has become more difficult just as the percentage of minority students in public schools has increased.

With decreased numbers of minorities entering higher education and obtaining master's degrees or teaching credentials, it is likely that large numbers of the nation's students will, throughout their schooling, have no contact with minority educators. Bernard Gifford considers the trend an ominous one: it could result in tension between minority communities and nonminority teaching staffs. The issue is significant not just in this generation of teachers: minority students may lack the role models that would guide their own choice of careers in education and the cycle may well continue.

Commentators such as Michael B. Webb point to at least three causes for decreasing numbers of minority teachers:

1. Like women, minorities enjoy expanded career possibilities; they can pursue professions more lucrative and prestigious than teaching.
2. Minority enrollment in higher education has lowered, presumably because of higher tuition costs and reductions in financial aid.
3. Minorities have a higher failure rate in teacher competency testing despite the fact that the performance of minority students on tests such as the SAT has been improving.

According to Peter A. Garcia, test bias in teacher competency tests may account for much of the problem. Most minority candidates grow up in environments substantially different in language and cultural patterns from those of the dominant society. Given the increase in minorities' SAT scores, it may also be that the more academically capable minority students are seeking careers other than teaching. Regardless, districts that evaluate teacher candidates by multiple criteria rather than by a single test score allow minority teacher candidates to demonstrate their unique contribution to education.

If the cycle is to be broken, with more capable minorities entering teaching and providing professional role models, recruitment must begin very early. Gifford suggests the recruitment of minority high school students who express an interest in teaching as a career. Providing them with highly qualified teachers and counselors in an intensive academic program can begin to alter the trend. Districts can work within their own schools, encouraging academically talented minority students toward educational careers, enrolling them in specialized pretraining academic programs, teaching test-taking skills, and developing scholarship funds for their education as teachers.

Once a district spots a trend of fewer minority teacher applicants, it can address this from a short- and a long-term perspective: first, expand recruitment beyond its geographical area to attempt to meet immediate needs, and second, extend recruitment down into its own secondary schools to meet needs of the future.

Selecting Teachers

Recruitment is only a first step toward the hiring of capable teachers. From among the applicants, schools must choose the best person to fill the vacancy. Making that choice is not easy: administrators tell of tedious decision-making and, worse, of serious consequences of mistakes.

With the amount of public attention drawn to the quality of teacher training institutions, one would think that teacher education graduates who have the "best" academic qualifications would have a distinct advantage in securing a teaching position. But could it be that, despite the concern about the qualifications of student teachers and the performance of training institutions, school districts themselves do not seek the most academically talented graduates? Could school districts be contributing to the problems of teachers' competency by not preferring the most promising candidates?

Recent studies support a hypothesis proposed by W. Timothy Weaver: methods used to select and place teachers do not result in more academically competent teachers being hired. In Weaver's study, subjects who had lower test scores on four out of five measures of academic competence in mathematics, reading, and vocabulary were more likely to be teaching than those who had higher test scores. Granted, the design of his study did not allow him to distinguish between those who did and those who did not actively seek teaching positions. In research designed to allow that discrimination, Nancy Perry found that the "best" candidates as measured by their grade point average (GPA), evaluation of their student teaching, and professional recommendations were not favored in hiring. Neither were the "worst" favored. Therefore, Perry concluded that academic criteria apparently do not significantly affect the job-hunting experience of graduates.

In a study by Beverly Browne and Richard Rankin, superior cognitive skills did not predict employment as a teacher. In fact, being rated as "bright" by a college supervising teacher was negatively related to finding a job. Calling for further research into hiring processes, Browne and Rankin concluded that personality factors may be more important than knowledge in determining whether or not an applicant is selected.

My own research has shown no significant relation between measures of candidates' ability and offers of employment. Neither has it shown any significant relation between measures of achievement within teacher education and subsequent employment, though in the same study the only significant predictor of success as a teacher was performance in student teaching. One possible explanation for these findings is that employers in school districts simply have not considered measures of the cognitive characteristics and academic achievement of potential teachers.

Why Is Selection Difficult?

Three conditions make the hiring of qualified teachers a challenge: complexity of the teaching function, insufficient attention to hiring, and inadequate selection techniques.

Teaching is a complex task. Teachers judge and organize curriculum, orchestrate simultaneous learning activities, diagnose group and individual needs, participate in school decision-making, advise parents, represent the school in the local community, and enhance students' academic and emotional health. Each individual teaching position in turn demands specific skills requiring a blend of specialization and generalization, independence and cooperation.

When teachers are expected to perform such a wide variety of functions, how does a school administrator assess so many abilities? Cognitive skills alone do not make a teacher. As Jean C. Sisk says, it is personal and social characteristics that make a teacher out of a scholar. Since the turn of the century, researchers have confirmed what personnel directors sense: no one measure or test can assess a candidate's potential as a teacher.

The situation facing small schools is particularly problematic. In small schools teachers often need to possess a wide range of abilities and certification in more than one area or level. In addition, there may be more pressure exerted on them to adjust to the community—to its expectations, its lifestyle, and its support systems. Since supervision may be remote, often teachers in rural schools must be capable of a high degree of autonomy.

A second factor that makes selection of qualified teachers difficult is that often little time, money, or attention is devoted to hiring. Most of the nation's school districts do not have policies for the selection of employees, and most administrators lack training in systems that would increase their chances of choosing the best candidate.

In addition, the selection of teachers has received relatively little attention from researchers. Compared with other areas of educational research, studies of hiring practices are few, validation of procedures is minimal, advice to well-intentioned personnel directors is scarce.

Third, the process by which teachers nationwide are commonly selected may explain in part why the "best" in terms of academic and performance ratings are not necessarily the first to be hired. The consensus of research findings is that in American schools administrators often fail to gather enough information about candidates. Decisions to hire teachers may be based on inadequate selection procedures.

General Selection Procedures

Typically, moderate- or large-sized districts follow one of two general procedures for selecting teachers:

1. *School building administrators, often with members of their staff, screen applicants.* After reviewing information about the applicants and interviewing them, the school recommends final candidates to the district office staff for approval. The district office staff member responsible for personnel reviews the applicants' files, verifies references, and approves or disapproves of the school's choice.

2. *District personnel officers or teams screen applicants.* After examining all information available about the candidates and perhaps conducting interviews, the personnel officer or selection team recommends five or six candidates to the local school. These candidates are considered to be the most qualified for the position. The local school administrator, often with members of the school staff, names the preferred candidate.

Each procedural option has its supporters. Administrators who favor the second procedure contend that it gives more assurance that the district is complying with equal opportunity regulations in employee selection. Those who argue for the first option believe that local administrators are in a better position to know the qualifications a particular job requires. Districts increasingly report the addition of layers to the selection process: such layers are seen as an insurance policy, a protection of the district's interest in teacher selection.

In one moderately sized district, the school principal and his or her selection team review applications on file at the district office, conduct preliminary phone checks of references, interview promising applicants, and refer two or three top candidates to the director of elementary or secondary education. Applicants surviving that level of review are sent to the director of personnel for a third interview. At each level of screening, interviewers use formal rating sheets and rank-order the applicants they see. To avoid biasing the next interviewer, candidates are sent to the next level unranked. At the end of the process, the director of personnel calls the school administrator to compare the district's ranking with the local school's choice. Consensus is valued but veto power is mutual. The procedure takes time, but the district's administrators believe the importance of selection decisions justifies the time allocated to the selection process.

Wherever the selection process begins, training of all those who will participate in selection is essential. Many districts use group training sessions for their administrators, leading them to consensus about the characteristics of good teachers and teaching them strategies that will identify those teachers.

One form of training occurs when districts validate their employment processes by studying how candidates selected in previous years actually performed in classrooms. If a teacher fails to perform according to the expectations of the district, capable personnel managers review the hiring of that candidate, seeking clues to what went wrong so that improvements can be made.

The Interview

The interview is the most common and influential selection technique used in the hiring process. Yet the interview, if used incorrectly, is neither valid nor reliable. The average interview may stand little chance of being a representative "slice" of an applicant's life, an accurate measure of a teacher's competence. Typically the interview is unstructured, lasts less than one hour, and is highly influenced by first impressions, appearance, nonverbal behavior, and conversational skills. Untrained interviewers tend to ask unchallenging questions and to use the interview as an opportunity to talk about their own philosophy.

Some studies suggest that many interviewers may arrive at their decision to hire or reject an applicant within the first five minutes of the interview. The remainder of the interview is used to find evidence to support their initial choice.

Although often maligned, the interview is not without promise. An interview helps employers evaluate a candidate's social and personal characteristics. It taps several areas of social competence that are associated with successful teaching—capacity for leadership, interpersonal skills, commitment, sensitivity, verbal expressiveness. The reliability of the interview process increases when interviews are structured: when candidates are asked the same questions, they in effect "run the same course." Despite the claims of their publishers, no commercially packaged, structured interview formats have been judged as valid in refereed professional journals. Conducting a thorough job analysis prior to the interview and using a selection team rather than an individual interviewer improves interviews.

William Goldstein offers a format and samples of questions designed to draw explicit answers from candidates. Good interviewing, he says, is like good teaching: it moves from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex.

> Interviews should allow the candidate opening familiarity—easy responses, perhaps about themselves—and move quickly to more rugged terrain. Regrettably, many interviews never leave easily traversed meadows for the more challenging mountains of intellectual questioning that stretch the candidate. Opening questions at interviews tend to deal with biographical information and the

> candidate's aspirations. Such questions have lubrication value; they ease strangers into familiarity. But once a firm footing is in place, such questions should be abandoned quickly.

Goldstein offers examples of questions from that more rugged terrain:

> A third-grade student chronically fails to do assignments in the prescribed manner. Conferences with parents have failed to alter the situation. The principal urges you to "keep trying." Your move.
>
> You give a pretest that shows you that map-reading skills of your fourth-graders are appalling. Describe your course of action in detail.
>
> How would you explain the concepts of inflation, interest rates and national debt to sixth-grade students at a level that they understand?

A mixture of questions that demand problem-solving and queries that tap subject-matter knowledge allows the candidate to demonstrate his or her thought processes as well as educational background. Despite the rigor of his format, Goldstein reminds interviewers to think like candidates, anticipating their emotions and tensions. Top candidates, he argues, will receive multiple offers: their choice may be based upon how they were treated in interviews.

Attraction to Similarities

Every district has its selection skeletons, applicants who owe their success as much to their friendship with the assistant superintendent as to their qualifications. Not unlike the industrial workplace, schools are accessible to those with connections, mentors, networks. Choices based primarily on internal connections are often obvious. Choices based on a phenomenon that can be called "matching," however, are more subtle and perhaps more dangerous.

I already noted that interviewers often make the decision to hire or reject the candidate within the first five minutes of the interview. That early decision can be biased by what business calls "the old school tie syndrome," the tendency of interviewers to prefer applicants similar to themselves. Donald L. Merritt, studying 500 principals, found they preferred candidates with attitudes similar to their own. The principals were so attracted to persons of like attitudes that attitude congruence between them and the candidates predicted hiring better than did qualifications for the job. Admittedly, shared values and attitudes may contribute to effective working relationships, but the selectors' decisions about candidates were influenced by the proportion of congruent attitudes, not by the relevance of the attitudes to the vacant position. Merritt concluded that the idiosyncratic attitudes of the reviewer may be the basis for selection or rejection of candidates.

Compatibility of attitudes toward education and the school may produce a homogenous staff, but should compatibility be valued more highly than the applicants' qualifications? To what extent should an effective school staff seek diversity among its members? Are teacher candidates selected because they in some way match the school's current quality? If so, strong schools become stronger while weak schools would tend to become weaker.

Most selection procedures look good on paper. It is relatively easy for school districts to write policies that proclaim fairness and enthrone excellence. But no matter how good the policies appear on paper, a more basic issue often influences how faithfully the written policy is carried out. Members of selection teams must ask themselves in what way their choices may be influenced by an attraction to applicants who possess attitudes or abilities similar to their own. Those who judge applicants must consciously examine the competencies needed in the vacant position as well as their own attitudes toward education, their school, and prospective staff members. Members of selection teams must identify their faculty's strengths and weaknesses to gain awareness of talents or perspectives that may be absent. Filling those gaps may mean hiring an individual who will challenge existing skills and norms. The critical question in hiring is not "Who will fit in?" but "Who will add to our skills?"

General Cognitive Ability

An increasingly accepted theory in industrial psychology says that employees' general cognitive ability predicts their knowledge of a job and therefore their performance in that job. According to John E. Hunter, the more complex the job, the more the generalization applies: higher ability workers are faster in cognitive operations on the job, better able to prioritize conflicting rules, better able to adapt old procedures to new situations, and better able to adapt to changes in the job.

Teaching clearly demands high cognitive skills. Teachers must be lifelong learners who are able to continually update their base of knowledge, to use new strategies, and to adapt to changing student and community needs. Carl D. Glickman summarizes research that indicates teachers who have the highest levels of conceptual understanding of education are more able to employ a wide range of teaching methods and have more positive relations with peers.

Despite the importance of cognitive ability, school district employers may instead seek teachers recommended as enthusiastic, dependable, desirous of working hard, cooperative, and able to benefit from advice, as Robert Mortalani reports. Without denying their importance, one must ask how well those descriptors alone predict an applicant's ability to master the complex tasks of teaching—organization of curriculum, diagnosis of group and individual needs, interaction with parents and community. One must also ask how well "able to benefit from advice" describes the teacher who is supposed to be a central participant in the schools' decision-making process and a responsible professional.

Unlike industry, school districts may not be looking for achievers and leaders. Elaine McNally Jarchow reports that when superintendents in one midwestern state responded to this statement, "Candidates with GPAs from 2.5-3.5 are preferred to candidates with GPAs from 3.6-4.0," only 59 percent disagreed.

Let us not overstate the case. After they screen teacher candidates for cognitive ability and achievement, employers must appropriately seek signs of commitment, integrity, empathy, energy, and, yes, magic. Looking for the teacher-scholar means shedding some stereotypes, admitting that the English teacher can enhance a child's linguistic prowess as well as his or her self-concept. Seeking academically qualified educators does not mean teachers will be less compassionate or less dedicated. On the contrary, it probably means teachers will be more self-confident and more capable of contributing to the strength of their school community.

Military recruiters, civil service officials, and employers in industry settings commonly administer tests intended to measure potential employees' cognitive ability. Most school districts instead use what they consider proxy measures of cognitive ability. Such proxies may include challenging interview questions, GPA, and formal tests. Although none of these potential "stand-ins" for more direct measures of cognitive potential can be considered predictive measures of teaching competence, together they can provide clues about an individual's academic preparation, achievement, and judgment skills.

Academic Achievement

A growing number of studies on the prediction of teaching performance are finding a relationship between academic achievement and teaching success. Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, districts have increasingly sought transcripts as evidence of an applicant's academic achievement. Even districts that traditionally discounted the importance of grades now publicize their desire for good students whose achievement is reflected in GPA and test scores.

The trend toward testing teachers represents one attempt to improve the competency of educators and to placate the concern of the public. Cut-off scores distinguishing passing from failing are usually determined by the states and may reflect little more than basic literacy. The tests are designed to screen out candidates with failing scores, not to be used as predictive instruments to help districts select candidates with superior skills. Although the tests may assume a minimum level of competency, they function primarily as symbols, and by no means do they serve as comprehensive answers to the teacher competency issue.

More and more frequently, districts are supplementing state-required tests with their own exercises, usually tests of written expression. Potential teachers are asked to write solutions to hypothetical dilemmas or to define elements of their educational philosophy. Personnel officers rate these efforts for logical expression of thought as well as for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Like other pencil-and-paper tests, district-designed examinations are limited in the scope of talent they are able to measure.

This is not to say that basic skills tests or pedagogical examinations have no value in the screening of potential teachers. They may not be predictors of teaching performance but they may establish a baseline of skill levels essential in any professional role. Like GPA, the tests can be viewed as one more piece in the puzzle of teacher selection.

Work Sample Measures

Even a thick file of scores and references for a candidate may not accurately measure the individual's teaching skills.

Industry commonly uses work sample measures to assess whether a person possesses the exact skills necessary for a specific job. After a thorough job analysis determines which skills are needed in the position, tests are devised to measure them. For example, an individual applying for a position as a typist may take a typing test. It is not common among school districts to use work sample tests, but perhaps it should be. Candidates for teaching positions could be asked for live or videotaped demonstrations of their work as instructors. Alternatively, interviewers could request a written lesson plan designed to teach a specified concept.

Critical-incidents tests are another form of work sample assessment. In this interview technique, candidates are presented with a specific problem situation and asked for solutions. Prior to the interviews, the selection team reviews the questions and formulates a scale of sample responses, rating them as high, medium, or low quality. Each interviewer independently rates the quality of applicants' responses by analogy to the sample responses.

My research suggests that student teaching might also be considered a work sample. The ratings of cooperating or master teachers were found to be the single best predictors of teaching performance three to six years after the completion of teacher education. This research also offers support for the inclusion of masterful teachers on selection teams. Those teachers who are themselves experts can make powerful contributions to the team's assessment of work sample tests.

Broadening somewhat the definition of work sample, leading districts are now considering the probationary years before granting of tenure to be samples of future teaching performance. Candidates in these districts are informed that the selection process is three years in length.

Certainly, selection strategies are becoming at once more thorough and more sophisticated. There is nonetheless no panacea for those who seek to choose the best teacher. Only a carefully considered, thorough selection process ensures that result.

Inducting Teachers

Mounting evidence indicates that the most capable teachers may not remain in the profession. Nearly 35 percent of new teachers nationwide leave teaching after three years. To encourage new teachers and to enhance their productivity in the classroom, many school districts have developed supportive programs for beginning teachers known as induction programs. The structures of induction programs, whether in educational or corporate settings, vary widely, but all share two common purposes noted by Phillip C. Schlechty:

> 1. to develop in new members of an occupation those skills, forms of knowledge, attitudes, and values necessary to carry out their occupational roles
> 2. to create conditions that cause new members to internalize the norms of the occupation to the point that the primary means of social control is self-control

The New Teacher in the School Culture

The new teacher faces many of the same adjustments that any neophyte in any organization is confronted with. Like the newcomer in industry, the new teacher is moving away from familiar places and roles and letting go of former lifestyles and roots.

> Let's face it. The new teacher who opens the classroom on Monday may have graduated last Friday. That teacher may have moved to a new area and lived alone for the first time. All of a sudden, he or she is expected to be an adult and a professional, and an exceptionally competent one at that.

John Mahaffy is director of the Center for Professional Development at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon. In an interview, he pointed out that many new teachers find their first years traumatic. Structures within schools tend to intensify the new teachers' problems: they often work in isolation, rarely observing each other or getting feedback from their peers. Without established structures of peer communication and support, the new teacher may wonder how to get help without admitting he or she is having trouble. Mahaffy is aware that school administrators may not realize the problems new teachers face:

> Sometimes principals will tell me they wish they had all beginning teachers because they are so competent and energetic. When they say that, I have to wonder how much those beginning teachers are hiding and how hard they are working to seem so competent. Teaching is an incredibly complex job and it takes time to learn it.

Teaching is undeniably "an incredibly complex job," but there is often little time to learn it. In most industrial settings, the orientation of the newcomer includes an apprenticeship period during which the new job may be experienced in a simple-to-complex learning sequence. Dan Lortie contends that this gradual assimilation into the job is not possible for the teacher:

> Fully responsible for the instruction of his students from his first working day, the beginning teacher performs the same tasks as the

> twenty-five year veteran. Tasks are not added sequentially to allow for gradual increase in skill and knowledge; the beginner learns while performing the full complement of teaching duties.

In fact, the job first-year teachers face may be more difficult than that experienced staff members encounter. When Elizabeth Clewett summarized research on the beginning teacher, she found that the difficulties of the new teacher tend to be exacerbated by organizational structures. Often new teachers are assigned larger groups of students, more difficult students, and more duties of both an instructional and noninstructional nature. The teaching assignment itself is also frequently unrelated to the new teacher's subject matter expertise and experience in teacher training.

Lack of supervision can contribute to the problems of the beginning teacher as well to the difficulties of his or her district. School principals are frequently reluctant to monitor the performance of new teachers during the first months of the school year, preferring instead to let new teachers "try their wings" without fear of evaluation. While this sentiment may spring from well-intentioned motives, it can have unexpected negative consequences. Unaided, new teachers tend to experience difficulties, particularly in discipline and classroom management, that increase as the school year progresses. Without supervision and feedback, they may repeat costly errors.

In many if not most schools, supervision of new teachers is rare, limited to infrequent and brief observations of classroom performance. Ironically, supervisors tend to rate beginners' competence more highly than do the beginners themselves. Perhaps afraid of discouraging new teachers, administrators may miss opportunities to encourage them.

Typically, new teachers tend to socialize themselves into the profession. They learn both the job of the teacher and the culture of the school by observing staff members rather than by communicating directly with them. A double barrier inhibits open communication: the newcomer is reluctant to disclose a lack of knowledge or competence, and experienced teachers do not wish to be seen as meddlers. Through careful observation newcomers may learn some of the techniques their more experienced colleagues have adopted. Beginning teachers report picking up clues from assignments on experienced teachers' chalkboards, papers left at the copy machine, and comments made in the lunchroom. In schools lacking a structure of peer support, the newcomers may suffer from lack of legitimate access to the expertise of their colleagues.

Clewitt's review of the research shows beginning teachers commonly face similar problems:

- classroom management and discipline
- student motivation
- adjustment to the physical demands of teaching
- managing instructional tasks (organizing work, individualizing assessment and assignments, instruction, locating materials and resources)
- sacrificing leisure time

- managing noninstructional demands of the position (establishing relationships with students, parents, colleagues; managing extracurricular assignments; enlisting assistance of other staff members)

Susan Roper and her colleagues at Southern Oregon State College emphasize the noninstructional challenges beginning teachers face. New teachers, they argue, need to learn to work with other adults, to acquire a more realistic view of the teaching profession, and to be given a more complete theoretical framework from which to work. Too often students enter teacher education believing they will work almost exclusively with children. Typically, teacher education focuses on preparing teacher candidates for instructional tasks and work with children. Rarely does the student teacher learn how to conduct parent conferences, work as a member of a teaching team, seek support in new settings, or deal with the frustration of not reaching every student.

Induction Programs and Teacher Competency

Induction programs vary according to their degree of formal structure and their ability to balance the needs of the beginning teacher and the employing district. One commonality is that they all promote a high level of interaction among the beginning teacher, administrators, and colleagues. Most programs feature one or more of these three structures: use of mentor teachers, increased supervision and training, and support groups for newcomers.

Mentor or Support Teachers

School staffs vary in their acceptance of new members. In the Isaacson study, new teachers had different experiences:

> Oh, they were very supportive, very warm....there were only fifteen faculty members, and it was a really friendly group.
>
> They aren't very friendly generally, especially because the high school is so big and a lot of them don't really feel comfortable there; I don't feel like that's my home. I just do my own thing, and I don't really feel a part of what is going on.

In a common model, experienced teachers serve as mentors or sponsors, providing the newcomer with friendship and access to a colleague's expertise. From discussing the math curriculum to untangling the social expectations of the staff room, the mentor acts as a soundingboard for the newcomer's questions and concerns. In addition to offering informal support, mentor teachers may provide formal classroom observation in a clinical supervision format.

The selection of mentors is critical. Research and common sense both suggest that a capable teacher who teaches the same subjects at the same grade level using the same instructional style could be very helpful to a new teacher.

Beyond this generalization, however, other qualities should be considered.

The mentor needs more than pedagogical skills: he or she must be able to communicate with the newcomer openly and supportively. Ideally, the mentor should be someone who views the learning process as a mutual one, someone who considers working with a newly trained teacher an opportunity to enhance his or her own skills. In addition to instructional skills, the mentor is likely to influence the values and attitudes of the new teacher. During the transition from student teacher and first-year teacher, newcomers are particularly likely to embrace the philosophy and attitude of mentors. The more uncertain or insecure a new teacher is, the more he or she will cling to the mentor's discipline strategies, worksheets, and beliefs.

Even an exceptionally talented teacher may not communicate effectively with new colleagues. Rather than assume mentors know how to inform, encourage, reinforce, and solve problems with new teachers, administrators should provide training to mentors on effective methods of delivery. If this is not done, the lines between consultation and advice-giving, guidance and judgment may blur.

Supervision and Training

Another model of induction emphasizes increased supervision and coaching by the site administrator or by the district's staff development department. Several states propose to consider the first year of teaching as an internship, one that features intensive feedback from district supervisors. In many schools, administrators offer increased supervision for first-year teachers. At its best, early supervision saves new teachers from making mistakes that could be prevented, reinforces their strengths, focuses their self-evaluation, and initiates them into a district's continuous professional development program.

Balancing the administrator's need to assess competency and the new teachers' need for support is not always a simple feat. In an attempt to achieve that balance, a staff development department in one large suburban district directs the induction program. Regardless of their previous experience, all teachers new to the district will see a member of the staff development team within the first two or three weeks of the school year. Teachers who have had teaching experience but are new to the district are observed and offered individualized staff development plans.

One of the district's staff development specialists assumes responsibility for coaching each beginning teacher. From the start, coaches attempt to be as supportive and nonthreatening as possible. Before school opens, they visit with the first-year teachers, focusing on the teachers as well as their performance in the classroom; the staff developers want to know what the new teachers are feeling as well as doing.

Coaching takes a variety of forms. In one option, the staff developer makes an appointment with the beginning teacher to observe classroom performance, then, while observing, writes or tapes what the teacher says. Soon after the lesson, the teacher does the first analysis of the script and the coach gives feedback, pointing out strengths and selecting one area for improvement. Lesson plan strategies from Madeline Hunter's Instructional Theory into Practice (ITIP) program are used as a basis for evaluation.

Coaching may also take the form of demonstration teaching, team teaching, or joint observation of another teacher. The staff developers sometimes literally coach from the sidelines, using preestablished nonverbal cues to guide new teachers through a lesson.

Are the early observations threatening to new teachers? District leaders contend that a newcomer to any organization feels anxiety but that their staff development structure in many ways protects the newcomer from tension by providing predictable support.

In most districts using a staff development coaching format, the routine of classroom observations and conferences is integrated with formal workshops. Topics focus on the typical needs and concerns of first-year teachers:

- providing classroom management and student discipline
- motivating students
- mastering content
- fitting into the school environment
- preparing and organizing work
- locating materials and resources
- establishing relationships with students, parents, colleagues
- adjusting to the physical demands of teaching

Like the mentor programs, those that offer intensive supervision and training deserve some caution. Coaches or supervisors must be able to maintain collegial, problem-solving relationships with new teachers; they must fight the temptation to require beginning teachers to conform to rigid guidelines.

One Northwest school district does not espouse any specific training format. Rather than teach one strategy of instruction, such as ITIP, leaders in this district annually form a training team that conducts a "New Teacher Seminar." The team—composed of district administrators and teachers as well as instructors from outside the district—invites interested, experienced teachers to join the seminar. The course is offered free of charge, and participants receive college credit for completing it successfully. In addition to weekly formal sessions, the training format features individualized classroom observations and followup. The seminar is held during the second quarter of the school year; during the first quarter, new teachers participate in informal support sessions and gather their needs into suggestions for the formal seminar.

Another caution is in order. Training sessions consume time, a valuable commodity for first-year teachers. Administrators need to balance new teachers' need for training with their need for planning and personal time. If training programs are to ease the newcomer's transition into teaching, they must deal with the most pressing needs first, be efficiently managed, and offer compensatory or release time to participants.

Support Groups

Newcomers in schools need to understand that disillusionment, dealing with surprises, and sense-making are normal upon entry into any organization. Districts can facilitate that understanding by forming support groups for new teachers.

Such support groups can accomplish another goal: linking training objectives to the needs of participants. Clewitt found that school personnel report offering more orientation and induction services than beginning teachers report receiving. Why the discrepancy in perceptions? District programs of induction may be largely ceremonial and ritualistic, not addressing the needs newcomers identify as important. More informal district programs are built around those expressed needs.

In one district, during the first nine weeks of each school year teachers new to the district meet once a week with their school's administrators. The weekly meetings acquaint new staff members with district policies, procedures, and values. They also create supportive collegial relationships among the teachers and administrators. Agendas are set by the group: the needs and questions of the new teachers guide the sessions. One teacher describes the mutual support she received from peers:

> Sometimes we'd get together and tell horror stories. Then we'd talk about how we could make our classes better. As a new teacher you say to yourself, "It's just me. Nobody else is having this problem." Then, when everyone else shares what problems they are having, you find out that yours is a common challenge in teaching and that there are ways to solve it.

Over time, perhaps the most significant contribution of induction programs will be the increased interaction they spawn among professionals in schools. Administrators and experienced teachers who unite to meet the needs of the newcomer develop in that process structures of collegiality and collaboration that will serve schools in other ways.

The following sections consider the next vital questions: Once recruited, selected, and inducted, how may capable teachers continue to grow through structures of supervision and professional development?

Supervising and Evaluating Teachers

The retiring superintendent, a forty-year veteran of public schools, summed it up: "What I've liked best about education are those predictable pendulum swings. I figured out that if I stood in one place long enough the pendulum would find me again and I'd be known once more as an innovator."

Of all its swings, the pendulum of educational theory is perhaps nowhere felt more strongly than in the area of teacher evaluation. Is the purpose of evaluation public accountability or teacher growth? Are summative or formative evaluations soundest? Is evaluation best engineered in a bureaucratic or professional style? Should principals or peers supervise teachers? And, lurking at the heart of the controversy, a question that could not be more basic: Is teaching a science, a craft, an art, or a bit of each? That is, does it require a specific knowledge base, an apprenticed learning, or an instinctive grasp of the learner's context? Is it then best evaluated by checklists, coaching, or intuition?

The Historical Context

In his review of the history of teacher evaluation, James Weber begins at the turn of the century, noting that "inspectors" rated teachers' conformity to district standards in both their professional and personal lives. Soon the emphasis shifted to a model borrowed from industry: observers in the scientific management era rated the apparent efficiency of teachers.

Gradually, administrators sought the cooperation of teachers in their evaluation and in 1973 Morris L. Cogan's *Clinical Supervision* charted the path toward partnership and reciprocity in teacher evaluation. Trends such as teacher-developed evaluation standards, context-driven interpretations, and peer supervision grew out of Cogan's model of trust and cooperation.

In still another pendulum swing, simultaneous to the popularity of the clinical supervision model, public pressure for teacher accountability encouraged attempts to standardize teacher tests and rating forms. Whether such standardization is intended to reward the most effective teachers or to weed out the least effective, these evaluation techniques are often distinct from those that focus on teacher growth. Attempts to find standards against which all teachers can be tested compete with efforts to recognize situation-specific issues in supervision.

The task of finding such standards is complicated by the nature of measurement itself. Valid and reliable measurement requires considerable sophistication: multiple measures, carefully prepared observers, and controls for observers, students, and environmental variables. Many behaviors and functions of teachers are simply not measurable. Measures of student growth are complicated by myriad factors including earlier instruction, home background, transiency, attendance, and emotional health. The school environment similarly contributes a score of variables such as pupil-teacher ratio, availability of materials and supplies, adequacy of support staff, overall school discipline, and management. Measurement experts, a vanishing breed in school districts facing budgetary reductions, may find a new purpose: the evaluation of teacher competency.

In summarizing his historical review, Weber asks pertinent questions: "Can state-mandated evaluation processes ensure that the gains in the humanization of teacher evaluation of the last century will be continued?" "Can teacher development strategies coexist with accountability strategies?" "Can the same people who decide teachers' career placement also oversee their professional development?" Another way of asking the same questions may be

"Will the two trends of evaluation—summative and formative—collide, merge, or exist side by side?"

Summative Evaluation

Accountability advocates prefer to emphasize summative evaluation, a system that usually rates teachers against a fixed scale of standards and then compares their ratings with those of colleagues. Summative evaluation typically focuses on minimum standards, allowing evaluators to distinguish marginal from incompetent teachers. Courts, in judging claims of teacher incompetency, prefer to believe that standardized measures have been taken of a teacher's performance.

Certainly many educational researchers might testify that teaching is too complex a function to be measured by standard rating forms, that such evaluation offers but an illusion of objectivity. Yet in practical terms summative evaluation serves an indisputably essential function in school districts: it is useful in making personnel decisions for promotion as well as dismissal. Used with a ranking system, summative evaluations allow districts to verify the skills of teachers proposed for merit pay and master teacher positions.

After coming to grips with the necessity of some summative evaluation processes, districts that wish to improve educational programs will look carefully at this form of evaluation, its shortcomings as well as its strengths. First, summative evaluations, in their emphasis upon minimum standards, can distract a district from educational excellence. Second, by placing administrators in the roles of "raters" rather than "colleagues" or "partners" in evaluation, summative evaluation can distance teachers from their own growth, making them recipients rather than originators of improvement. Third, summative evaluation falls prey to the problems inherent in any human measurement: evaluators may be untrained or biased, standards may be inconsistent, and single or simplistic measures may be used even though reliability demands multiple or complex measures.

Summative evaluation is improved when administrators are trained in measurement, observations are made over time, and teachers verify the standards and processes that will be used. Yet even when these improvements are in force, districts concerned about the shortcomings of summative evaluation have come to a simple conclusion: it cannot stand alone. Hence the potentially colliding historical streams merge peacefully, as districts combine summative evaluation with formative supervision .

Formative Supervision

Formative supervision focuses on teachers' professional development. Most formative models are feedback models: observers gather data useful to the teacher and, in conference with the teacher, analyze implications of the data. Unlike the standardized forms of summative evaluation, this form of supervision is context-specific and individualized. Typically teachers assume a strong professional role in their own self-evaluation, suggesting goals for improvement, strategies for observation, and plans for remediation. Properly orchestrated, formative supervision is linked directly to staff development goals and objectives. The feedback process enables both teacher and supervisor to determine what specific improvement in subject matter expertise or technical skill will promote increased learning in the classroom.

A professional orientation toward evaluation enhances the rights as well as the responsibilities of teachers, providing a framework for teachers and administrators to work together. Allan A. Glatthorn recommends that teachers select which of four types of supervision they want in a given year. Teachers could choose, he says, from clinical supervision, cooperative professional development, self-directed development, or administrative monitoring. While he suggests clinical supervision is most needed by beginning teachers or others experiencing difficulties, he sees cooperative peer development and self-directed development as most useful for experienced teachers. Frequent unannounced visits by an administrator complement the evaluation cycle, according to Glatthorn; such monitoring gives the principal information about the day-to-day functioning of the school.

Clinical Supervision

Cogan's text on clinical supervision has inspired many followers of the professional model, among them Noreen B. Garman. In her discussion of clinical supervision, she outlines four concepts that should guide its practice: (1) collegiality—supervisors are participants in the process of teaching, (2) collaboration—an alliance is formed in the interest of good teaching, (3) skilled service—the supervisor's experience and skills are placed in service of the teacher, and (4) ethical conduct—the supervisor's knowledge will not violate the confidence each holds in the other.

The original clinical supervision model includes a conference prior to classroom observation, data collection, and feedback. In the preconference, the teacher defines the objectives of the lesson and the purposes of the observation, asking, for example, to be observed to improve classroom management or inquiry techniques. Together the supervisor and teacher select a form of data collection, for example, an on-task record or an interaction analysis.

Frequently supporters of the clinical supervision model also embrace Madeline Hunter's seven-step structure for lesson plans, using that format to evaluate teacher performance. Two controversies arise from this intertwining of models. First, Hunter discounts the preconference, claiming it wastes time and biases the observer. Her own critics, such as Barbara N. Pavan, counter that eliminating the preconference reduces collegiality in the supervision model. Second, administrators may tend to limit the clinical supervision theory to Hunter's model of teaching. As Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil demonstrate, there are currently over twenty defined models of teaching, each appropriate for different purposes. Garman, criticizing the tendency of school administrators to simplify evaluation by exalting one model, insists such action stems from an attitude "more like religious certitude than intellectual inquiry."

Artistic Supervision

In contrast to procedures designed to measure teaching competency by following a predetermined plan for observation, evaluators using naturalistic or artistic forms of supervision begin with the desire to understand what is happening in the classroom. Elliot Eisner wants the supervisor to be an "educational connoisseur," one able to detect significant if subtle events and characteristics of the classroom, one able to appreciate what one has encountered. While other systems encourage objectivity, Eisner urges the observer to be intuitive and sensitive, aware of implicit assumptions in the classroom as well as explicit instruction:

> The idea that the skills of teaching can be treated as discrete elements and then aggregated to form a whole reflects a fundamental misconception of what it means to be skilled in teaching. What skilled teaching requires is the ability to grasp their meaning, and the ingenuity to invent ways to respond to them.

Rather than use rating scales, proponents of naturalistic evaluation prefer to use verbatim transcripts, videotapes, anthropological descriptions, and teacher and student interviews. The observer attempts to understand and describe the meaning behind teachers' actions, rather than tallying their frequency or describing their surface appearance. Such depth of knowledge is won only by openness and an investment of time.

Gradually, more attention has been given to the decision-making process that underlies excellent teaching. Evaluation and supervision, if they are to promote growth, must pay attention to the atypical decisions of teachers as well as their typical behavior. David Berliner, commenting on expert teachers (in an interview by Ronald S. Brandt), expresses at once his bewilderment and the complexity of evaluation:

> We know . . . what observable teacher characteristics are related to effective teaching. Now we want to go inside teachers' heads and ask them why they do the things they do.
>
> For example . . . a teacher whose students have more time on task will achieve more. Why then, on a given day, will an expert teacher simply throw the task out the window?

Conclusions in the effective teaching literature are based on correlations between supposedly stable teacher characteristics and student learning. Nonetheless, Berliner finds the behavior of expert teachers varies from day to day and year to year. "Why? These are able, experienced people. There's something they are responding to that makes them change a routine that has worked perfectly for 30 days in a row. They know something we don't."

They know something we don't. Knowing the limits of observation, knowing when to ask "Why did you do that?," preserves the professionalism of the teacher and the integrity of the teaching act.

Who Should Supervise?

Keith Acheson and Stuart Smith believe that school principals are at a disadvantage when they attempt to do both summative evaluation and formative supervision, regardless of what models they employ. Principals, they contend, lack time, updated training, and recent classroom experience that could make their suggestions practical. Sharing instructional leadership with others may mean more and better supervision of teachers, particularly probationary staff.

It is becoming increasingly common for peer supervisors or coaches to work with teachers in formative evaluation. Their efforts are coordinated with the summative evaluation usually performed by the school principal. Using supervision teams of expert teachers or peer partners addresses common criticisms of summative evaluation: these evaluators offer the benefit of time for multiple observations, credibility gained by recent teaching experience, and presumably increased comfort for the teacher. Carolyn Ruck likens the principal's role in evaluation and supervision to that of a building contractor, "one who is in charge of the total project but who coordinates others' efforts and guides their decisions without controlling them."

The pendulum clearly has not stopped swinging, even though there are many who hope it will steady itself in some middle zone, combining summative and formative purposes, technical and artistic methods, administrative and professional personnel.

The next section considers the dismissal of incompetent teachers. Immediately following that section, this chapter concludes by examining a more pleasant outgrowth of good evaluation—effective staff development programs.

Dismissing the Unsatisfactory Teacher

Although administrators estimate that unsatisfactory teachers comprise only 5 to 15 percent of employed teachers, these individuals take an inordinate toll upon students, colleagues, and the school organization. Ironically, their presence has bolstered many of the school effectiveness reforms discussed earlier in this chapter. Districts honestly facing the long-lasting repercussions of incompetent teaching are more likely to reshape recruitment, hiring, and induction processes. Yet, unhappily, these reforms are not the final answer to the issue of teaching competence. Incompetent teachers may have been tenured before the reforms; probationary teachers may have nearly as many employment rights as tenured instructors; new teachers who successfully complete their induction phase may change in their work habits, level of commitment, or emotional stability.

Need for Documentation

As distinguished from teachers dismissed due to insubordination or immorality charges, tenured teachers whom administrators consider ineffective are rarely dismissed. Why are there not more dismissals of incompetent teachers? Edwin M. Bridges says, "School districts that wish to confront this challenge face a formidable array of legal, technical, and human problems." Kelly Frels and Timothy Cooper concur, pointing out that due process requirements tend to place the principal, along with the teacher, on trial.

Appropriate documentation not only prepares an administrator for legal proceedings, it offers the teacher clear and concrete evidence of the charges as well as suggestions for improvement. Charges of incompetence rarely stem from one incident or even one cause. More likely, such a teacher displays a pattern of behavior over time that departs from standard practice; this pattern is documented by multiple observations and a series of suggested plans for remediation. Frels and Cooper provide a useful guide to the process of documentation, including memoranda to the principal's file, specific incident memoranda, records of classroom observations, and summaries of conferences with the teacher. They counsel administrators to rely on factual descriptions, avoid inflammatory words, and give clear directives.

The majority of charges brought against allegedly incompetent teachers involve poor discipline and classroom management. Other charges commonly include inadequate work habits and interpersonal relationships. Whatever the charge, first-hand observation and recording illuminates the degree of incompetence. For example, to record that "two students are wrestling on the floor during this geography lesson and three students are throwing pencils" produces clearer images than does "Mr. Jones has difficulty maintaining control of his social studies classes." "This teacher was more than fifteen minutes late reporting for work on 50 out of 160 days" clarifies a "tardiness" problem. "Mrs. Smith did not attend eight out of ten department meetings during this school year nor did she offer excuses for her absences" substantiates the charge that "Mrs. Smith does not take adequate responsibility for the functioning of her department." Similarly, verbatim transcripts of lessons can support other common charges of poor organization and planning, failure to control temper, or lack of proper grammar and spelling.

District Leadership

Clearly the principal cannot stand alone in attempts to terminate ineffective teachers. Not only does the teacher merit appraisal by more than one observer, the principal needs and deserves a second (or third or fourth) opinion. Bridges recommends that school districts take an organizational approach to the problem of incompetence. He outlines eight elements:

- Establish excellence in teaching as a high priority
- Adopt and publish reasonable criteria for evaluating teachers

- Adopt sound procedures for determining whether teachers satisfy these criteria and apply them uniformly
- Provide unsatisfactory teachers with remediation and a reasonable time to improve
- Establish and implement procedures for ensuring that appraisers have the requisite competencies
- Provide appraisers with the resources needed to carry out their responsibilities
- Hold appraisers accountable for evaluating and dealing with incompetent teachers
- Provide incompetent teachers with a fair hearing prior to making the dismissal decision

The growing body of research on effective teaching may provide some of the assistance principals and districts need to terminate unsatisfactory instructors. In the past, one obstacle to the support of the courts in dismissal hearings has been the lack of clear standards of teacher effectiveness against which an individual teacher's performance might be judged. Delbert K. Clear and John M. Box contend there has been a "desperate need for stable standards of performance" that will withstand judicial scrutiny. Court cases will become clearer to the degree that standards of required teacher knowledge and competence can be matched with evaluation systems capable of detecting departures from the standards. Clear and Box provide a list of teacher behaviors correlated with student learning, including their research base and their role in recent court decisions.

Documented incidents of incompetence need not always lead to dismissal hearings. In some cases remediation plans are effective: counseling, change of grade or school, supervised practice, or additional training may empower weak teachers. For both legal and ethical reasons, a district must make clear demonstration of repeated good-faith attempts to help ineffective teachers succeed. If such interventions fail, districts may be able to persuade unsatisfactory teachers to resign. In those cases, offering outplacement counseling as an adjunct to requests for resignation demonstrates the district's dual commitment to excellence in teaching and concern for the future of its employees.

Dismissing an incompetent teacher is probably the most time-consuming, emotionally draining task an administrator faces. Yet, as a single act, it has perhaps the greatest repercussions for the quality of education in a school. Bridges concludes his work on the management of incompetent teachers:

> A district that ignores its incompetent teachers may undermine the political support of parents and taxpayers, lower the morale of its competent teachers, and, most importantly, diminish the educational opportunities of some of its students. Conversely, a district that deals forthrightly with its unsatisfactory teachers can expect to increase public confidence in its institutional effectiveness; to preserve, if not raise, the morale of its teaching staff; and to provide all of its students with a meaningful and adequate education.

Facing the incompetent teacher is one link in the chain that produces effective schools. Without such confrontation, a district's investment in teacher selection and induction becomes just that—an investment for some distant future. To raise the quality of education in the short term, the health of a district's current teaching staff must be assessed as critically as that of potential future staff.

Planning Professional Development

It is 3:00 in the hot, humid afternoon. The speaker, poised at a chalkboard, searches the eyes of his audience for response, considering whether this inservice session will result in any changes in the classroom. Research allows us to make a few guesses provided we have some additional information.

Characteristics of Effective Training

According to Meredith D. Gall and Ronald S. Renchler, researchers tend to agree that staff or professional development programs result in improved teacher competence and student performance to the extent that

- participants are involved in the choice and design of training
- training objectives are clear
- objectives relate to improved student academic performance
- teachers' own expectations for success of this method are high
- complex skills are introduced gradually
- during the session, teachers learn from each other
- participation is mandatory in order to raise total school effectiveness
- the principal participates
- extensive followup aims at application and generalization of skills
- some followup aims at application and generalization of skills
- some followup takes place in teachers' classrooms
- participants receive some incentive or recognition, such as release time, college credits, movement on the salary scale

Ruth K. Wade adds a few more characteristics to the list. She recommends presenters assume strong leadership of the session and use techniques of microteaching, independent study, audio and visual feedback, and practice. Whether the training is voluntary or mandatory is not significant, she says, but she contends the best results may come from mixing elementary and secondary teachers. Unlike writers who believe the most effective inservice is born at the school or district level, Wade finds that programs developed or funded by state or federal government or by universities have the greatest chance of success.

And certainly, whether or not scientific studies support the theory, one might reasonably conclude that only under extraordinary circumstances could the combination of 3:00 p.m., heat, and humidity be predictive of growth in teacher competence or student achievement. Meticulous planning precedes productive staff development: practical, as well as theoretical, issues cannot be ignored.

The Supervision Connection

Teachers everywhere assure hesitant students that tests are for their own good: "Today's exam tells me what you need to learn next." Earlier in this chapter teacher supervision/evaluation was said to be a precursor to the design of staff development programs within a school. When teachers undergo their own tests—assessments of professional competency—those "exams" should clarify goals of continued learning.

One Northwest school district terms these goals "targets." Targets for growth are established collaboratively by teacher and supervisor, resulting from self-appraisal and classroom observation and leading to specific staff development experiences. Similarly, when supervisors observe in each classroom of a school, they piece together a picture of the instructional program as a whole. Teacher and student performance in mathematics may be minimal; inconsistencies in language arts programming may be evident; many classrooms may show poor on-task rates. Whether the supervisor aids an individual teacher in finding needed training or helps fashion a schoolwide development program, evaluation is linked to further growth.

There is yet a second way of looking at the connection between supervision and staff development. Supervision done well *is* staff development. When educators look together at instruction, their collaboration prompts growth.

District Commitment

Professional development must not, however, be seen simply in a deficit design. By definition, professional development improves the capacity of individuals and groups to function professionally, whether it focuses upon their personal growth, implementation of curriculum, or improved functioning of the school as an organization. Because of its critical and wide-ranging goals, professional development demands a districtwide commitment.

The commitment needs to be both philosophical and financial. Districts noted for outstanding professional development programs share common beliefs: schools can always do better; change takes time; teachers who learn have students who learn. These districts have "five-year plans," carefully orchestrated designs that offer employees districtwide classes, school site training, pilot research programs, individual coaching, or tuition reimbursement. Comprehensive plans include informal programs as well: teacher materials centers, peer coaching relationships, team planning meetings. Teachers sharing with teachers is as important as experts sharing with audiences.

Whether professional development is on a formal or informal basis, effective programs aim to institutionalize reform through followup, often using peer coaches or district-based teams of newly trained trainers. If change is to be effected in teaching behavior, staff development must focus as much on the application of knowledge as on the accumulation of knowledge. The days when the "Music Men" of education went from district to district offering one-hour inservices that promised to reform classrooms are hopefully diminishing in the light of research that stresses the necessity of extensive followup.

Finally, like any other professional program, staff development can be approached from a bureaucratic or a professional viewpoint. Teachers can enter a program resisting the fact that it is being "done to them," or they can be active initiators and participants. If professional development is indeed to be a professional activity, administrators need to share responsibility with teachers for its design, operation, and evaluation. Like any other administrative function, the process becomes as important, if not more important, than the product.

Conclusion

From the recruitment and selection of teachers to their supervision and development, leading the instructional staff is one of an administrator's most critical functions. The processes are themselves interrelated, interlocked.

The quality of those who apply for teaching positions within a particular school and of those who stay in the positions is related to the quality of the school itself. Capable candidates seek effective schools. They are more likely to be attracted to leaders who have high expectations for themselves and their staffs, who fashion supportive evaluation and professional development programs, and who summon the time and courage to dismiss incompetent instructors.

Whether the administrator is designing a program of recruitment, induction, supervision, or staff development, the process is as important as the product. To the degree that the process recognizes teachers as professionals, using their opinions and expertise, programs are likely to succeed. To the degree that the process emanates from a bureaucratic or paternalistic philosophy, one that allows changes to "happen to" educators, programs are likely to fail miserably. The method is, in fact, the message.

Schools that offer good working conditions for teachers—environments characterized by cohesion and support, collegiality and professionalism—attract outstanding educators. Better yet, they keep outstanding educators. Organizational vitality and teachers' competency interrelate as mutual cause and effect.

Chapter 11

Communicating

David Coursen and John Thomas

Good communication has always been an important part of effective school leadership. Whether educators have been outlining the rules to nineteenth-century children in a one-room school or explaining innovative teaching methods to contemporary parents, administrators have always needed to be effective communicators.

By *communication*, we mean the art of listening carefully and expressing views clearly and concisely—skills essential for anyone in a leadership position. For example, high-level administrators of successful businesses say that the most valuable managers in their organizations are those who excell in such communication skills as giving employees timely feedback about their work, accepting criticism without being defensive, speaking clearly and succinctly, and being good listeners. Interviewed by Susan Glaser and Anna Eblen, the top-level executives also said they valued managers who expressed their "feelings, opinions, and ideas openly." These communication skills are as valued in educational organizations as they are in the business world.

This chapter offers some suggestions for administrators who want to learn how to communicate more effectively with people both within and outside the school. Divided into two major sections, the chapter discusses principles and skills of effective interpersonal communication and then recommends strategies for communicating with the public.

Learning to Communicate

Communication is a human relations skill that is, in a sense, only half understood. Most people believe that if they speak or write clearly, or make gestures whose meanings can be clearly understood, they are communicating successfully. However, in a basic sense, communication is a two-way process, a sharing of information. This means that communication is listening as well as speaking, understanding as well as being understood.

Communicating for Understanding

Saul Alinsky, the labor organizer, once said that a person could lack every quality that makes a good organizer and still be successful—with one exception. That person would have to be able to communicate.

"Communication with others takes place when they understand what you're trying to get across to them," Alinsky wrote. "If they don't understand, then you're not communicating, regardless of words, pictures, or anything else."

It doesn't matter what you know, Alinsky said. If you don't communicate—and in terms within your audience's experience—you're not even a failure. "You're just not there," Alinsky said.

When he spoke to groups, Alinsky often employed analogies relating to sex or the toilet. He was not intending to shock people, particularly, but he was using terms common to all. The reaction he looked for was laughter, a nodding of heads, some sign of understanding or agreement. Failing to find a point of common experiential ground at which his audiences could receive and understand, Alinsky attempted to create an experience for them, often with the use of modern day parables, jokes, and demonstrations to illustrate his points.

He once told of a man trying to give away ten dollar bills within a four-block radius in New York City. One man apologized for not having change. Several hurried past, claiming not to have any money. A woman angrily said she wasn't "that kind," while another said she didn't come "that cheap." Still others believed it was a con game. Alinsky's point was that the demonstration produced shock, confusion, and silence—together with avoidance or actual flight—because it was an attempt to communicate in a way that was outside the scope of experience for these New Yorkers. The same stunt, undertaken at the Bowery, would have had the opposite results: taking money from strangers was within the frame of experience for derelicts and transients.

According to Alinsky, communication that is too abstract and general—without being reduced to smaller bites by the specifics of experience—is rhetoric without much meaning to your listeners. He cited the difference between news of the death of a quarter million people and news of the death of a close friend.

As Alinsky helps us to see, the communicator must be able to grab the attention of his or her listeners by relating to their experience. This principle is all important when the school leader is trying to get a point across to anyone—a student, a teacher, or a group of parents. The able communicator reflects on the listener's experience and chooses words, a story, or a personal illustration that will establish common ground. And the communicator fleshes out his or her message in concrete terms that will be clearly understood.

As we inquire further into the communication process, we will see that this theme of communicating for understanding appears again and again. Next we examine the components of the communication process, before discussing some particular communication skills.

How the Process Works

In an article on the communication process for principals, Jerry Pulley identifies some of the points where problems can develop. Understanding these points of potential interference is essential to successful communication and to seeing why communications sometimes go awry. In the classical model of communication, there is a source, a message, a medium, a receiver, and a reaction. The following points are worth remembering about each:

- *Source.* How the source (in this case, the school leader) is seen is very important. A principal must have a positive image and an aura of credibility.
- *Message.* All messages should be delivered in clear, grammatical language, free of jargon and "loaded" words. When delivering a message, the principal should be conscious of body language and other forms of nonverbal communication.
- *Medium.* The chosen medium should be effective in reaching the desired audience and getting its attention. Face-to-face contact, which allows for direct feedback, is ideal. Often, several media can be used simultaneously, so that people missed by one will be reached by another.
- *Receiver.* Any message will be received with a certain number of preconceptions and a certain amount of prejudice, and a school leader should never forget this. By understanding his or her receivers, the principal can try to construct a message that will not alienate them.
- *Reactions.* These are difficult to predict. Even if the first four parts of the model are carefully considered and handled, there still may be unexpected reactions. Anticipate as many as you can, and try to plan for them.

Since there is always an element of risk in communicating openly, *trust* is particularly important, according to Richard Schmuck and Philip Runkel. They list what they call "freeing responses" to increase trust:

- listening attentively rather than silently
- paraphrasing, checking impressions of the other's meaning
- seeking additional information to understand better
- offering relevant information
- describing observable behaviors that influence you
- directly reporting your own feelings
- offering opinions, stating your value position

The authors also list things that reduce trust, which they call "binding responses":

- changing the subject without explanation
- focusing on and criticizing things that are unchangeable
- trying to advise and persuade
- vigorously agreeing or strongly objecting
- approving someone for conforming to your own standards
- commanding or demanding to be commanded

Communication Skills

Charles Jung and his associates point out that there are no real tricks to good communication; the only secret is having a sincere interest in the other person. A number of skills, however, are important for the effective communicator to understand and master. The skills that we highlight here are listening, asking questions, paraphrasing, agreeing and disagreeing, describing behavior, describing feelings, checking perceptions, and giving feedback.

Listening

People who are trying to become more effective communicators should begin not by learning talking skills, but listening skills, say Susan Glaser and Anthony Biglan. Although often thought of as a silent, passive activity, they say, listening need not be and should not be so limited.

Indeed, as Richard Gemmet points out, nonverbal signals—eye contact, attentiveness, use of hands, facial expressions, and tone of voice, among others—are often the best communicators of your interest. Good listeners, he says:

- Don't interrupt, especially to correct mistakes or make points
- Don't judge
- Think before answering
- Face the speaker
- Are close enough to hear
- Watch nonverbal behavior
- Are aware of biases or values that distort what they hear
- Look for the basic assumptions underlying remarks
- Concentrate on what is being said
- Avoid rehearsing answers while the other person is talking
- Never tune out because of "red flag" words or start mental combat
- Avoid having to have the last word

Gemmet describes listening as an art. One masters it, he says, by developing "the *attitude* of wanting to listen, then the skills to help you express that attitude." Good listeners have learned to discipline themselves so their minds don't wander. Frank Freshour mentions five approaches these good listeners use:

> *Visualizing*, for example, picturing themselves as being in the speaker's shoes or engaging "in the activity the speaker is talking about."
>
> *Analyzing* the speaker's message. "Does it make sense? Is it logical? What evidence does the speaker provide? . . . Is the communication a matter of fact or of opinion?"
>
> *Summarizing* what the speaker is saying by recapitulating the main points and evidence.
>
> *Taking notes* of both the main ideas (on the left side of the paper) and supporting details (on the other side).
>
> *Anticipating* what the speaker is going to say. "If you are correct, you learn by repetition. If your anticipation is off the target, you learn by comparison and contrast."

A skill related to listening is asking questions.

Asking Questions

Question asking is an excellent way to begin communication, because it tends to make the other persons feel you're paying attention and interested in their response. In fact, it sounds like you want even more. Asking more effective questions, say Glaser and Biglan, involves three skills:

- asking open-ended questions that can't be answered with a single word
- asking focused questions that aren't too broad to be answered
- asking for additional details, examples, impressions

Paraphrasing

Jung and his colleagues comment on one of the oddities of modern life. If someone tells you his or her phone number, seven unambiguous pieces of information, you will probably repeat it to make sure you have it right, but if he or she makes a far more complex statement, you are likely to offer simple agreement or disagreement. In other words, as the possibilities for misunderstanding increase, our efforts to clarify messages generally decrease.

One way to avoid misunderstanding is paraphrasing—repeating what you just heard in an effort to show the other person what his or her words mean to you. Paraphrasing allows you to confirm your perceptions and assumptions. In this way, you not only clarify the meaning of the message, but you show genuine interest and concern about better understanding.

Jung and his colleagues stress that the real purpose of paraphrasing is not to show what the other person actually meant (which would require mind-reading skills) but to show what it meant to *you*. This may mean restating the original statement in more specific terms, using an example to show what it meant to you, or restating it in more general terms.

Glaser and Biglan warn against overdoing this skill. People who paraphrase constantly—even simple, relatively unimportant statements—are often regarded as tedious.

Agreeing and Disagreeing

To communicate, we must also present some of ourselves to the other person, letting them know how we feel about what they say. One way to do this is by agreement, say Glaser and Biglan, because it allows us to respond actively. Even disagreement, when done effectively, contains an element of agreement, and the school leader who has learned to agree directly and clearly will find it much easier to disagree productively.

Social psychologists have found that people who agree about important things find it much easier to work together amiably. Agreement puts the other person at ease and establishes rapport quickly. It is not necessary to avoid disagreement when you do not agree, the authors say, but indicating points of commonality with the other persons will make it easier for them to accept your opinions. Disagreement, in fact, may make your agreement more meaningful. The authors add that it is particularly important to express agreement with new acquaintances.

Describing Behavior

When talking about what someone is doing, it's important to distinguish between *describing* and *evaluating*. Useful behavior description, according to Jung and his associates, should report

> specific, observable actions of others without placing a value on them as right or wrong, bad or good, and without making accusations or generalizations about the other's motives, attitudes or personality traits.

It's important to be precise about the behavior to which you are responding, say the authors, and to describe a specific set of actions without judging the behavior. For example, "You've disagreed with almost everything he's said" is preferable to "You're being stubborn." Try to confine your remarks to things that are observable and stick to the facts without trying to draw conclusions about their meaning.

These suggestions can not only enhance communication, Jung and colleagues say, but will also reduce defensiveness. When someone feels threatened by a comment or action, his or her defensiveness can distract from important questions at hand and itself become the issue. Types of supportive communication that can reduce defensiveness include:

- describing rather than evaluating
- solving the problem, rather than controlling the situation
- being spontaneous, rather than following strategy
- empathizing, rather than remaining neutral
- relating to others as equals, rather than superiors or subordinates
- approaching differences of opinion with openness to new perspectives, rather than dogmatism

Describing Feelings

How people perceive your feelings often has more to do with *their* feelings than your's. Furthermore, if you're like most people, you probably work harder describing your ideas clearly than you do describing your feelings. For these reasons, it is not always easy to describe or understand feelings.

The way to avoid misperception of feelings is to describe them as directly and vividly as possible, say Jung and colleagues. Attach the description to yourself by using the word "I," "me," or "my." Some ways to do this include referring directly to a feeling ("I'm angry"), using similes ("I feel like a fish out of water"), describing what you want to do ("I'd like to leave this room now"), or using some other figure of speech.

Be precise and unambiguous in describing your feelings, they advise. Saying "Shut up!" may express strong feelings, but it doesn't identify those feelings. It's better to say something more informative like "It hurts me to hear this!" or "Hearing this makes me angry with you (or with myself)!" Any of these statements explains why you want the other person to stop talking.

As in most aspects of communication, it is crucial to be open and honest. Feelings should be offered as pieces of information, not efforts to make the other person act differently. Again, nonverbal cues—facial expression, tone of voice, and body language—should agree with words.

Perception Checking

Just as paraphrasing is an effort to find out what another person's words mean, perception checking is an effort to understand the feelings behind the words. One way of checking perceptions is simply to describe your impressions of another person's feelings at a given time. This helps you find out how well you're understanding the other person and, again, shows your interest in the other person. This should be done in a way that avoids any expression of approval or disapproval.

Giving Feedback

One way to clarify communication is to ask people for their reactions to any messages sent off by your behavior. Feedback is a way to share understanding about behavior, feelings, and motivations. In giving it, say Jung and associates, it is useful to describe observed behaviors, as well as the reactions they caused. When giving feedback, follow these guidelines:

- The receiver should be ready to receive feedback.
- Comments should describe, rather than interpret, action.
- Feedback should focus on recent events or actions.
- It should focus on things that can be changed.
- It should not be used to try to force people to change.
- It should be offered out of a sincere interest and concern for the other person.

When you are receiving feedback, you should first state what you want feedback about, then check what you have heard, and share your reactions to it.

A feedback skill that is especially important for administrators is to let staff members know how well they are doing their jobs. In Glaser and Eblen's study, the managers who were most valued by high-level business executives looked for opportunities to give their "employees timely positive feedback about their work." In contrast, "the overriding finding" about ineffective managers was that they stressed poor performance and rarely gave positive reinforcement. "These managers were not there to compliment, but were usually there if something went wrong," the researchers say. Effective managers did give negative feedback when necessary, but privately and without anger or personal attack.

Also, say Glaser and Eblen, effective managers "accepted criticism without becoming defensive." They used negative feedback about their own performance to learn and change.

Exercises for Improvement

Schmuck and Runkel suggest several exercises to help develop or refine the above skills:

- *Paraphrasing.* Divide into small groups. One person asks a question; the next paraphrases before answering.
- *Impression Checking.* Divide into pairs; one person conveys feelings through gestures, expressions, nonsense language, while the other person tries to interpret these cues. The two then talk about how correct the interpretations were.
- *Behavior Description.* Describe the behavior observed during any nonverbal exercise.
- *Describing Feelings.* Each person is given a written list of statements and told to identify which describe feelings and which do not (e.g., "I feel angry" does, but "I feel it's going to rain," does not).
- *Giving and Receiving Feedback.* Divide into trios. One person describes two helpful and two unhelpful behaviors of the second, who paraphrases the descriptions; the third person acts as an observer, making sure the other two are using communication skills correctly.

The same authors also describe exercises that clarify communications in meetings:

- *Right to Listen.* Each speaker is required to paraphrase the terms of the discussion up to that point before speaking.
- *Time Tokens.* Each person pays a poker chip each time he or she talks. This clarifies who talks how often; if it provokes long speeches, it will also illustrate their drawbacks.
- *High Talker Tap-out.* Signal when each speaker uses up an allotted amount of time; at the end, discuss the process and the reasons some people talk more than others.
- *Take a Survey.* Ask each person for an opinion about a certain question. Everyone contributes, if only to admit having nothing to say.

Schmuck and Runkel recommend circular seating for groups because it has two advantages: (1) nonverbal behaviors are most apparent when everyone can be clearly seen, and (2) equal participation is encouraged when there is no podium or head-of-the-table to suggest someone is "in charge." In certain circumstances, they add, videotaping or audio recording may be useful (if someone with skills and experience is available to judge what to record and when to play it back).

The Principal's Responsibility

Because of the principal's influence, it's important that he or she communicate effectively. Jerry Valentine and his colleagues studied the impact of principals' behavior on the school's climate. "Generally speaking," they found, "the more direct the principal, the more positive the attitudes of teachers, students, and parents." Whenever they found humor used in human relations, they added, they also found a "significantly relaxed, positive human relations atmosphere."

Removing Barriers

Faulty communications between principals and teachers rob a school of its effectiveness, say Patricia First and David Carr. Communication barriers can deplete team energy and isolate individuals who may then proceed on the basis of faulty assumptions regarding personalities or goals. In this type of situation, trust between principal and faculty—as well as overall morale—can be seriously inhibited.

Increased contact, then, would seem to be the logical remover of such barriers. First and Carr suggest that teachers should be involved early in any decision, and they should generally be kept up-to-date about whatever is going on. Meetings and various inhouse communiques are often used for this purpose. Private discussions can often provide the kind of frankness and openness needed to clear the air, while they also remove interpersonal barriers before they become larger problems. Such meetings can also be the occasion for praise and compliments for good work, say the authors. These methods are an effective way to improve communications within the school.

Giving Praise

Robert Major argues that principals can use sincere praise whenever possible to create a more constructive atmosphere in schools. Being willing to "give strokes" and express appreciation for jobs well done are essential. One principal, after observing each class, always leaves a note mentioning only positive things. Later, if she has any criticisms to make, she meets with the teacher so she can make them face-to-face.

Being Accessible

The principal must be certain communication channels are open both ways. The most important thing a principal can do to improve relations with the school community, writes Sandro Ingari, is to be open and accessible. It is important for people to feel you are available and welcome personal contact with them. Ingari suggests spending time with various faculty members—over lunch, during coffee breaks, in the faculty lounge, or at informal teacher "hangouts." Add the personal touch, Ingari says, by asking people about their families or calling them by their first names.

Beyond effective communicating, this is good business practice, no matter what your profession is. A manager or administrator who doesn't know the staff also can't tap its expertise and experience to full advantage. A manager who doesn't, say Susan and Peter Glaser, is only using half the available resources. The more you get to know your staff, in fact, the better your chances of a successful administration.

Building Teamwork

A good communications climate, says Elmore Rainey, leads to effective teamwork. An administrator who takes the time to get to know the staff will be able to identify, develop, and make best use of each staff member's capabilities. Good teamwork in a stimulating environment grows out of an earnest effort to help each staff member achieve his or her potential, Rainey writes, and the prime mover is the administrator. A supportive, encouraging, open climate stimulates communication, avoiding the problems related to misinformation and misunderstanding.

Communicating in Small Groups

Administrators have always had to communicate with groups of staff members, parents, and students, and this ability has grown in importance with the spread of shared decision-making. Successfully meshing the various human factions in such groups can be a difficult task, requiring a delicate touch. Group members have three primary needs, according to William Schutz:

- Inclusion (or belonging)
- Control (or power)
- Affection (or friendship)

These needs must be satisfied, Schutz writes, if the group is to be successful, and they must be met adequately, but not excessively.

Inclusion

When any group is just starting, inclusion is particularly important. Introductions and the sharing of brief, pertinent biographies about each member can often help meet this need. Assigning a "greeter" at meetings, passing out name tags to members, and organizing get-acquainted activities or social events can also help.

Overinclusion, however, can also be a problem, Schutz warns. Group members need to maintain some individuality and distance from the larger group, he says, to preserve diversity in terms of viewpoint and feedback and to maintain a richness in terms of human resource. The establishment of subgroups and a realistic division of labor is an effective way to avoid counterproductive "homogenization" of the organization.

Control

In traditional groups, members are given influence in decisions through such activities as exercise of voting power, election of officers, and the establishment of authoritarian hierarchies. Many groups avoid domination of the group by any one faction by limiting the amount of control members have over one another. To make sure control is evenly distributed, Susan Sayers suggests that groups study their decision-making process and practice role-switching. By giving each member a turn as the dominant member, the group can foster an equitable distribution of control.

Affection

Beyond these overall safeguards and checks or balances, an interpersonal element must be present for the group to succeed, Schutz points out. Group members must "relate to each other with sufficient warmth and closeness" to further the group process. They must also have the freedom to express their feelings to avoid draining energy through "the suppression of hostile impulses." The need for affection can often be satisfied by allowing group members to talk briefly and informally during their work, meet for coffee after the business of the meeting, and bring refreshments to the meetings and coffeebreaks.

Like inclusion and control, affection is best used in moderation, warns Schutz. Too much closeness in a group can interfere with its ability to serve its primary purpose. It can also lead to the personalizing of issues within the group, where an issue otherwise regarded as good or bad can be decided (accepted or rejected) by the group on the basis of the popularity of the member identified most strongly with the issue. To avoid this problem, says Schutz, rules should be adopted early in the group's existence about nepotism, fraternization, agendas, and other procedural techniques, including the matter of discipline for too much affectional play.

Communicating with Angry Groups

Controversy is no stranger to the public schools. Any number of situations—from the closing of a school to a book in the library—can become rallying points for groups of angry citizens. How should the school administrator respond?

In the case of controversial or heated issues, say Susan and Peter Glaser, it's important to pick the time and place for the interaction and to think before you speak. Make sure that you are clear about what you want from the interaction. This is a crucial phase, for you do not want to jeopardize certain goals you may want to achieve with the group later, after the controversy has passed.

You can begin by finding some common ground—something about which you and the group's spokesperson can agree. A good way to do this is to ask questions, then paraphrase the person's response. This will not only give you important additional details, but help you listen effectively.

Once you know the other person's general point-of-view, you can get additional information by asking for specific examples likely to be behind these views. (There is at least one good reason behind every strong feeling.) Find out why the group feels the way it does and why it thinks this or that is an important issue. At times, you can guess about specific instances and let them tell you if you're right. This will open a dialogue between you, say the Glasers, and often defuse any tension in troublesome situations, while allowing you to consider how you will respond or react.

Then, it is important to agree with them. There are always two aspects of any issue with which you can agree:

- the facts of a situation
- the other person's sincerely held perception of those facts

This doesn't mean you must cave in to a different point-of-view, say the Glasers. On the contrary, you can easily maintain your own stand and simultaneously acknowledge that, yes, X incident *did* take place; and yes, the group feels strongly about it.

At this point, the Glasers say, there are four basic ways to respond to suggestions or demands relative to the issue:

- Say "yes" and implement as soon as possible.
- Say "no" but tell them why.
- Table the suggestion while you study the issue further. It's important to set a time limit on this phase. Never allow things to simply float.
- If you don't have enough information, ask for more from the group, or appoint a sub-group to study the situation further. You don't have to agree or implement suggestions or demands from every group to maintain a successful relationship with the community, but some response is vital.

Moving from general to specific, this section outlined elements of the communication process, described pertinent communication skills as well as ways to develop those skills, discussed the principal's responsibility for establishing positive communications in the school, and then covered principles of communicating in small groups and with angry groups. Now our attention shifts to another important aspect of communication for school leaders—communicating with the public.

Reaching the Public

Just as important as good internal communications are effective communications between the school and the public outside. Lew Armistead quotes John Wherry, executive director of the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), as saying that educators can get the public to support their schools if they do four things:

1. Do a good job.
2. Do a Good Job.
3. Do A GOOD JOB.

4. Make sure people know about it.

Public relations, Wherry says, has never been a way to cover up mistakes; there is no substitute for doing a good job. Some administrators, however, go to the opposite extreme—believing that doing their job well makes public relations unnecessary. Their view overlooks a basic fact, according to Armistead. Every school has a public relations program, formal or not, that operates whenever the staff or students come in contact with the surrounding public.

When a parent meets with a school official, when a child describes what went on in class during the day, or when a caller is greeted courteously, the school is communicating something to the public. If that caller is put on hold and forgotten, the school is also communicating something.

The question to ask about school public relations efforts is not, then, *whether* to develop a program but *how*.

Planning the Public Relations Program

What would an ideal public relations program look like? Its elements are contained in this definition by the NSPRA:

> a planned and systematic two-way process of communication between an education organization and its internal and external publics . . . to stimulate a better understanding of the role, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of the organization.

As this definition suggests, planning is essential if the public relations program is to have a positive outcome. Positive public relations, in fact, are those that are planned, says Armistead. Ineffective—or even destructive—programs are those that just happen.

In planning the program, target audiences should always be clearly defined, along with strategies for best reaching them. A memory device Don Bagin, Frank Grazian, and Charles Harrison suggest to help recall a useful checklist is "GOSSEY":

> G-Goals; what do you want your PR program to accomplish?
>
> O-Obstacles; what stands in the way of achieving these goals?
>
> S-Strategy; how can you remove these obstacles or solve these problems?
>
> S-Selection; which one do you pick and how will you carry it out?
>
> E-Evaluation; how did it work, when you tried it?
>
> Y-Why; why did it succeed (or fail)?

"Brainstorming" can also be a useful tool in both the planning and organizing stages of public relations programs. It is also a useful way to generate dozens of ideas, whether you want to produce publications that are free from professional jargon or just send the school band to a convalescent home. It is also an excellent way to identify important groups—from senior citizens and business organizations to various religious groups.

A key step in planning a public relations program is to decide what objectives the school wants to meet. Possible objectives cited by Bagin and colleagues include the following:

- promotion of public interest in the school
- gathering and reporting information about public attitudes about the school
- providing an honest, comprehensive flow of information from the school *and* the public
- reaching all the public through effective use of all available media
- developing community confidence in the schools
- educating the children through an all-out effort that integrates home, school, and community
- anticipating and forestalling problems caused by misunderstandings
- all of the above

Attending to Informal Messages

School contact with the public can be divided into three classes:

- public and formal
- private and fonnal
- private and informal

The first two—covering a school's official business from report cards to press releases—are generally recognized as public relations concerns. But the often-neglected third type is by far the most important.

Communication takes place whenever anyone associated with a school gives the public any kind of message about the school. These messages can be conveyed by students, volunteers, or employees. Many people see *all* school employees—custodians, secretaries, teachers, and administrators—as "insiders" with special knowledge or information about school operations. The message they transmit may be verbal (a rumor or comment about policy) or nonverbal (litter on a school neighbor's lawn, or students helping a motorist change a flat tire). Because many of these exchanges are beyond a principal's control, a well-run school with a satisfied, well-informed staff and student body are essential to any public relations effort.

Fostering Two-Way Communications

Like other communications, school public relations must run in two directions. Beyond keeping the public informed about the school, the school's job is to keep *itself* informed about what the public is thinking about the school. It's important, then, to evaluate all current communications, analyze what various groups or individuals think, identify major criticisms, and evaluate the school's reputation.

Public relations—PR—could as accurately be termed RP, or relating to people, Armistead says. A two-way communication is vital: everyone should get a chance to express views or perceptions.

School administrators should never get so caught up in their efforts as to lose sight of primary goals. A classic example of bad public relations is the school district breaking its back to communicate with the public and not getting any feedback from that public, writes Philip Dahlinger. Administrators should daily remind themselves that they work for and with the community and its children. They should remain open, accessible, and receptive at all costs. Moreover, he says, they should be willing and able to take action quickly, correcting errors and resolving problems as soon as possible.

The Media

Although personal contact is the long-range key to effective communication with the public, the best way to reach a large number of people in a short time is through the media—print and broadcast. Reporters can have tremendous impact on the public consciousness. They are seen, heard, or read by large numbers of people at the same time, and their news has a certain built-in credibility.

Media coverage gives school leaders a chance to tell their story to a large group, but the form that story takes is beyond their control. Coverage can be negative or positive, a fact that can be intimidating to administrators. The right of the press to cover news and the public's right to know it, however, dictate the reporting of newsworthy events in schools. Thus it is the administrator's job to work with the media and see that coverage of school events is as fair and accurate as possible.

In working with the media, the biggest problem for school leaders is the alarmingly easy way misunderstandings develop between school and media. This is inevitable to a certain extent, because of the tension between the school's and the media's objectives. Schools want reporting that promotes *their* objectives and avoids trouble. The media wants stories to interest viewers or readers. School officials thus may perceive the media distorting or sensationalizing events, taking comments out of context, or reporting facts inaccurately. From its side, the media may see administrators refusing to "come clean" or limiting media access to information and offering them material that is little more than puffery—enthusiastic but not newsworthy.

Striking the right balance would be easier if schools were accessible to the media *and* accepted the need for the coverage of news—good and bad—advise Bagin and colleagues. Schools need to recognize the media's legitimate function as eyes, ears, and voice of its community, they say. School officials should treat reporters not as intruders, but as trained professionals with a right to keep their public informed. But because the media's function is to report what it knows, school officials would be well advised to avoid saying things they don't want published.

A working relationship based on trust and mutual respect and understanding can be promoted by the school's willingness to give the press a diet of news *steadily*—not just at budget time. Honesty, credibility, and respect for reporters' needs with regard to deadlines also contribute to a good working relationship.

It's also helpful for school officials to get to know reporters personally. Reporters are paid to cover the news, however; friendships will never prevent the reporting of unfavorable events. Although most reporters are conscientious and careful, many are so overworked and burdened by deadline pressure that some honest mistakes are inevitable. School leaders should make it a practice never to take negative coverage or mistakes personally.

In working with the media, say Bagin and colleagues, schools should:

- know a paper's policies and deadlines, and respect them in preparing or releasing material
- provide the media with calendars of newsworthy events, and agendas of meetings
- call press conferences when damaging events occur
- alert the press to potential stories
- deal with the press honestly, sincerely, and fairly
- send the press formal invitations to school functions
- cultivate relations with broadcast, as well as print, media

The Local Newspaper

Of all media outlets, says Armistead, probably the quickest, cheapest way to reach large numbers of people is through the community newspaper. Many citizens—even those without children in schools—get their information about schools this way.

If you have access to such resources, Armistead advises using the school district's public relations and media professionals: they have the skills, experience, contacts, and time to obtain the needed coverage. If you don't have access to a public relations staff, he says, write your own news releases and send them from the school. It's a good idea, he says, to contact the managing editor directly with your suggestions for news coverage, first checking the newspaper's schedule so you don't undo all the good effects by calling at the worst possible time: just before final deadline on a busy, understaffed day.

Editors like material that is timely and new, and being part of a school gives you an almost unlimited source of possibilities. A good rule of thumb, says Armistead, is that any event involving a large number of people has news potential.

Nicholas Criscuolo also stresses the value of regular, personal contact between educators and reporters for paving the way to increasing both the amount and quality of news coverage. He suggests meeting with them to discuss coverage—past, present, and future—and scheduling your own news conferences often enough not to "disappear" from the public mind. Most newspapers—and many television stations—have reporters assigned to the "education beat," and Criscuolo suggests making a special effort to invite these people to school so they may observe various events and activities. Even if they were already planning to attend, it creates a nice, friendly, open impression.

Criscuolo also recommends making use of your staff's writing talents, with regard to contributed articles for newspaper publication. If all else fails, he says, don't be afraid to do it yourself. If you can make such a commitment, volunteer to write a regular newspaper column or editorial page feature about various school-related topics, especially if the newspaper doesn't have a regular education reporter.

Radio and Television

Although newspapers may come to mind first when educators think of publicity or news coverage, radio and television can also play major roles in any school's publicity program.

Most stations have standardized procedures for use of "PSAs"—or public service announcements—developed from information supplied to them by various organizations and institutions, including schools. You should not expect these opportunities to be volunteered, however, warns Armistead. Your best course, again, is regular, personal contact with the news director or program director. Simply pick up the phone and ask.

In addition, he says, educators should become familiar with regularly broadcast news features—those hour or thirty-minute programs that feature local news. The station's program director can give you necessary information about details, restrictions (if any), and deadlines.

Television will be more selective than newspapers or even radio, says Armistead, but an administrator who remembers to "think visually" will seldom have much trouble. Always keep in mind this medium's need to have something they can *show* their audience.

Your Own Resources—Inhouse Media

School-based media are another way of reaching various groups. These media allow school leaders to say exactly what they want in a form that is under their control. Those who develop a publication of this type should keep its primary purpose in mind, understand its intended audience, and make certain the benefits justify the costs. All written material—from letters to brochures—should strive for clarity in writing, format, design, and graphics.

Printed material should be distributed by mail. Sending it home by students may be cheaper, but the U.S. Postal Service is considerably more reliable!

A 1980 Michigan survey of parents showed that roughly 80 percent of them got their school news from the humble newsletter. Others reported that notes, comments on school papers, memos, and other similar material generated by the school were regular sources of the same kind of information. Additional surveys cited by Armistead also show that newsletters are important sources of information for parents. The underlying message, he says, is that you should never underestimate the value or importance of your school's newsletter. They are much more widely read than you may have thought.

In preparing a newsletter, says Armistead, it's important to avoid the appearance that you only publish when you want something from its readers. The sudden arrival of a newsletter or some other school publication, bristling with budget figures and your interpretation of them, plus your arguments for approval of the overall budget—all coincidentally a week before the big budget election—will work against you. It is very likely to generate more suspicion than support and cost you valuable credibility.

Instead, says Armistead:

- Write frequently.
- Write in language that your readers will understand.
- Write about things that will interest them.

Lack of funds needn't keep you from having a newsletter. Local businesses may be willing to support part or all of such publications in exchange for mention or credit as sponsors.

As a matter of cautionary common sense, have someone *else* read everything before you mail it to the community. Those tales in *Readers Digest* about embarrassing typos are amusing but all-too-familiar. In addition to creating a kind of perverse immortality for you, they also work against a campaign that should be showcasing your professionalism and expertise as it builds community confidence.

Staff bulletins may be your best method of keeping everyone current on inhouse information. These bulletins don't *need* to be fancy, literary, or particularly artistic, says Armistead, but they need to serve their primary function, come out regularly, and go to everyone.

Again, they should have information the staff needs and wants to know in language that will make it clear to them.

In some schools, staff bulletins are also sent to people outside the school—the president of the local parent-teacher organization, chairs of advisory groups, booster clubs, and sometimes even the media. If your staff bulletin can be used this way as well, you have an excellent method of informing additional groups about your school without additional cost in time and money.

Lee Schmitt adds that publications such as letters, annual reports, budget proposals, and other documents can sometimes serve the same purpose, if their content is suitable for publicity. In addition, he points out, announcement boards, public exhibits, showcases, wall displays, and the like can also "get the school's message across" in a simple, relatively painless way. Conferences and other programs, while not technically broadcasting, can often reach audiences—those actually attending—in much the same manner, with just as effective an impact. In some cases, the impact, because of its simplicity and low-keyed quality, can be even more effective than a more elaborate, hard-sell approach.

An audience motivated to attend school programs may not always come predisposed to support you or the school, but they can often be won over by an effective, well-documented, well-presented program. At least, you can count on such audiences to listen attentively.

Surveys

One way to find out what the public thinks or wants from schools is the opinion survey. When most of us hear the word *survey*, we tend to think of the national polls: Harris, Gallup, and Nielsen and Arbitron rating services. Technically, however, a poll can also be a show of hands from that same attentive audience in your auditorium.

One innovative Oregon principal makes it a point to provide a generous supply of number 2 pencils at all breakfast meetings. She invites those attending to write down any ideas or comments relating to the agenda and business at hand, then to turn them in, coffee stains and all. Many schools include a "log" for parental comments on their report cards. Others regularly place questionnaires in their own newsletters, school paper, or the community newspaper.

In larger school districts, a public relations office commonly handles polling and survey research, whereas smaller school districts rely on their individual school staffs for such expertise. These days, not many graduates of accredited schools of education will have missed at least brushing up against a course or two on statistics. Even with limited actual experience, most of these people will be able to handle a survey of limited, carefully defined scope.

Before beginning such a formal survey, however, an administrator should decide what information is needed (and why) and have some idea of the cost involved. If the cost is a problem, it may be possible to get the same information by other means—by informally polling key communicators, for example.

Once a survey strategy has been chosen, the next step is to define whom to survey, what type of survey to use, and what questions to ask. It's important to realize, in advance, how reliable the survey will be and how quickly the results will be available. The best, most reliable, and economical survey will be an ongoing program that keeps schools and public constantly informed about each other.

However, you may find yourself heading a small, special staff of researchers, or even doing the job yourself, depending on the information you require, time constraints, staffing, and resources. Using a study of legislative behavior as a model, Lee Anderson and his colleagues discuss the steps involved in the research process:

- design of project
- hypothesis making
- data collection
- generation of measures and indexes
- inference from empirical findings

A handbook by Charles Backstrom and Gerald Hursh-Cesar provides a collection of checklists that are of use for the actual conducting of surveys, whether you are a beginning pollster or an advanced scholar with extensive experience in various kinds of research. It is designed to be used as a guide for field studies that are also training sessions for those less familiar with survey research.

In sum, the key to good public relations is knowing whom you want to reach, knowing what they know, and knowing how to tell them what they *don't* know.

A Time-Saving Suggestion

An effective public relations program is essential to a school, but it takes time, one commodity no principal has enough of. One solution to this problem is to assess the situation, decide on a suitable public relations approach, and devote five minutes a day to implementing it. If the first day's task takes more than five minutes, the time can be credited to future days. As a result, there will be a systematic and ongoing effort to improve public relations that does not make unreasonable demands on the principal's time. Several writers suggest that it is surprising how much can be accomplished with even this modest investment of time.

Conclusion

Communicating can be a complex, difficult (as well as occasionally frustrating) business. Yet for the school leader who perseveres in understanding and communicating with students, parents, staff members, other administrators, and the community, there is a rich payoff. Effective communication with these groups can produce a positive school climate and good school-community relations.

Although there's no secret formula for communicating effectively, a few general guidelines have emerged from our discussion. The dominant theme is the need for clarity, which is at the heart of good communication, whether spoken or written. Parents, media representatives, and other citizens need to be kept informed, in the clearest possible terms, about what is happening in the schools.

Equally important, communication is a two-way process that involves listening as well as talking. There may be times when the best way to communicate—or to lead—is simply to listen to what others have to say.

Chapter 12

Building Coalitions

John Thomas, Thomas E. Hart, Stuart C. Smith

In recent years many school leaders have decided it is no longer enough merely to have a dialogue with the community in which they explain the district's needs and find out what the community wants. When tax revenues are insufficient to fund excellence and citizens are apathetic, these leaders reason, it is time to go *into* the community and aggressively enlist support for schools. Thus administrators in progressive districts are becoming coalition-builders; they are learning the skills of a political strategist who identifies potential allies of the schools, recruits them to the cause, and helps the divergent groups overcome their differences so they can work together.

Coalitions and the process of forming them vary greatly from place to place. They can be formal or informal, be temporary or permanent, meet regularly or not at all, deal with one issue or many. In some cases, coalitions—going under such names as partnerships, local education funds, alliances, or foundations—represent a broad-based community effort to improve the school system as a whole. In other cases, the coalitions seek to accomplish specific objectives (such as passage of a tax measure) or manage particular projects (such as an antidrug program).

In still other cases the coalition-building process aims not to create an organization but rather to enlist the support of any number of segments of the community for the educational system. Such support may take the form of volunteer work for the schools, yes votes at budget election time, donated supplies, parental encouragement of their children to do well in school, or simply community good will. In this sense, the coalition-builder is merely applying proven principles of effective public relations while orchestrating the efforts of various groups or individuals on behalf of the schools.

Guided by this broad conception of coalition-building, we have written this chapter both for school leaders who want to build formally organized coalitions and those who want to appeal to and garner the support of key constituencies through informal contacts. Following a brief look at some examples of coalitions, we discuss the process of initiating and operating organized coalitions. Then, the remainder of the chapter advises school leaders on how to establish informal supportive relationships with parents and other members of the community, including state and local government agencies.

Examples of Coalitions

In one informal coalition-building effort, a superintendent in a small

Northwest town meets with loggers over morning coffee, with ministers of the churches, and with other groups he has identified. In another district, school officials accommodated the needs of an active senior citizens group by installing special equipment in the district's swimming pool. This district also gives senior citizens Booster Passes so they can attend sports events and use school facilities. These examples show how school officials, with creativity and initiative, can find ways of generating support for schools even among the most unlikely constituents.

Examples of formally constituted coalitions are the many local education funds (LEFs) in urban areas across the country. LEFs are local independent groups of community leaders who work to improve the quality of public education. Each fund has a stated mission, bylaws, board of directors, and hired director. According to the network's 1988 handbook, LEFs have served to reduce the isolation of the public schools, restore confidence in the schools, and generate local money for school improvement.

Another example of a formally organized coalition is Denver's Public Education Coalition, which began in 1984 to address problems facing public education in the metropolitan area. A series of issues starting with a segregation case in the late 1960s, a loss of population, and a financial crisis because of the fall in oil prices served to spur community members to "build constituencies supportive of public education and to increase involvement in and awareness of the schools so that the community begins taking responsibility for educating our children," says Susan Zimmerman, the coalition's executive director.

North Clackamas School District, south of Portland, Oregon, provides an example of a coalition formed to assist the district's business operation. No immediate issue gave rise to the action, but rather an idea that the local school district should make sure the public is getting a product it wants and needs. In November 1982 the school board approved the formation of a business-advisory task force. William Dierdorff, the district's business manager, writes that, although the task force was "initially formed to improve the business practices of the district and strengthen the linkage between the district and the business community, it was soon discovered that this relationship could prove beneficial to all—the district, the business community, and the community in general."

As these examples show, the initiative to form coalitions sometimes is taken by school district officials and other times by community leaders. If the district takes the initiative, then it will have a major role in shaping the coalition's mission. It must also be prepared to allocate some resources (time and some funds), both initially and as an ongoing commitment. The sections that follow are addressed to school officials with the assumption that they are taking the lead in forming coalitions with their communities.

Initiating a Coalition

In any community many disparate groups are in positions to assist or hinder school projects. If a coalition is to be a constructive force in supporting the schools, the groups involved must be able to work together to fulfill the goals of the coalition. A school district that wants to solicit participation in a coalition should be able to identify, on the basis of its knowledge of the community, major groups that can be asked to be "a part of the action."

Identifying Members

To determine potential members, the coalition builder can compile a list in three categories as suggested by Terry Black:

> (1) all of the "natural" allies—individuals, groups, types of people—who may share the concern and support a similar position; (2) all of the types of persons, groups, and social structures likely to be affected by the issue or position taken—both affirmatively or negatively; and (3) all potentially interested and civic-minded groups who might stand to gain indirectly by supporting the same issue or constituents.

Another way to identify groups is a community information questionnaire, which can be used to gather data about the political, social, economic, and power bases in the district. The Michigan State Board of Education recommends that the district compile a fact sheet displaying such data. The board says the analysis of the community should include descriptions of (1) the community demography (formation and development of neighborhoods and their styles, patterns of land use and zoning, general population statistics); (2) the community power structure (the persons or groups that influence community decisions); and (3) the community life support systems (communication, culture, housing, law, recreation, and so forth). This information is the starting point for determining the constituencies from which coalition members will be recruited.

Several examples clarify how a coalition might be constituted. The New York Alliance for the Public Schools brings together the leadership of the Board of Education; the United Federation of Teachers; the Council of Supervisors and Administrators; the United Parents Association; corporate, civic, and community leaders; and a working consortium of the deans of education at five universities. This might seem a large group, but the alliance has a large number of diverse projects in which different groups participate to varying degrees.

The Allegheny Conference Education Fund has twenty-one corporate financial contributors and enjoys the cooperation of business and civic leaders, members of the Pittsburgh Board of Education, previous and current school superintendents, the district's administrative staff, the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers leadership, and teachers, principals, and students of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

The Public Education Coalition of Denver includes on its board the superintendents of four Denver metro area school districts, school board members, teacher union leaders, and business executives.

Contacting and Recruiting Members

Once potential members of the coalition are identified, the next step is, in Black's words, "to develop a strategy for selling" the coalition to potential participants. Black emphasizes that the coalition builders must clearly understand and be able to appeal to the potential members' self-interest, for the "pursuit of self-interest is fundamental to effective political action."

Districts will be better able to attract groups to the coalition if they can clearly demonstrate how the members will benefit from participation. For example, the North Clackamas School District lists the benefits businesses that join its Partnerships in Education coalition can expect to receive:

- better educated students who may one day be your more productive employees
- the opportunity to directly affect the quality of your local schools and ultimately, your community
- an improved quality of life for your employees' families through neighborhood stability and community spirit
- use of the school's resources for special classes, training programs or physical fitness activities
- the satisfaction of helping students understand the business world as they prepare themselves for careers

When taking their "sales pitch" to the key persons in the targeted organizations, coalition organizers should not only ask for help in developing the coalition, but also actively welcome ideas, Black advises. The goal is to enable all participants to feel a sense of ownership in the coalition's direction.

The final step in forming the coalition, Black says, is "to invite representatives of all allied organizations to an area-wide meeting to make a formal/official decision about whether to form a coalition, how the coalition should be structured, and what coalition strategies and activities to initiate."

In an alternative process for recruiting members, Lynda Martin-McCormick suggests that groups be contacted in a systematic way, consisting of three steps. First, a member of the recruitment committee phones the prospective members to find out if their organizations are interested in joining. Second, given a positive answer, the committee sends a letter inviting the organization to join the coalition and outlining exactly what is expected of coalition members and how they will relate to the goal. Third, the committee meets with the new member. At the meeting they discuss ways that the two organizations will be able to work together. This meeting may be followed by a formal letter of acceptance and commitment to participate in the work of the coalition.

Establishing a Governing Board

All formally organized coalitions have governing boards that establish policy and (if such will be a function) generate funds. So that the board will be credible to all participants, its composition should be representative of all segments of the community that the coalition wishes to include. If there is a large industrial base, then leaders of prominent industries should be included; if there is a university, then appropriate faculty or administrators could be invited; if it is a farming area, representatives from that sector might be appropriate. Most boards include members from the area churches, banks, chambers of commerce, and civic groups. The school district can be represented by such individuals as a school board member, the superintendent, a principal, a teacher, and a representative of the teachers union.

In cases where the coalitions operate independently of the school system, the education representatives may not form a substantial proportion of the board membership. Instead, most board members are leaders in the community. This situation should not be disturbing to school district personnel, because the coalition's raison d'etre is to find additional sources of expertise for the district. In fact, in some coalitions, the superintendent may not even serve as a board officer, though he or she could certainly be a board member. The same might also apply to participation by the teachers union or the school board. Local conditions, which dictate the need for the composition of the coalition, will also determine how to constitute its leadership.

Once the board is established, a common practice is to form committees to oversee the coalition's planned projects. This will help to divide the work and will enable individual committees to enlist the help of additional participants as needed. One committee might also be established to draw up bylaws or regulations, which are necessary if the coalition is to become involved in fund raising. Bylaws are required as part of a 501(c)(3) application, which is a request to the Internal Revenue Service for a letter of determination that clarifies the organization's nonprofit status for tax purposes. A lawyer should file the articles of incorporation and handle the (501)(c)(3) application.

Operating the Coalition

Because the very nature of a coalition brings together disparate groups and individuals who do not have a history of working together, the biggest challenge will be to keep the parties cooperating on the task at hand. Conflicts can threaten the coalition's unity unless it follows procedures that enable the members to work harmoniously. A related issue is the need to maintain open communication between the coalition and the school district.

Anticipating and Dealing with Conflicts

"Internal group conflict is inevitable, should be anticipated, and treated constructively as part of the process of coalition building," states the California State Department of Education. Indeed, Black warns that "the coalition landscape is a minefield." Issues of turf and pecking order arise continually, he says, because the members are organizers and leaders in their fields. Black lists some of the difficulties coalitions can expect to face:

> Coalitions (1) may divert energy and resources from an organization's own priority issues; (2) take positions contrary to a member organization's interest or policy; (3) may use a consensus process for decision-making that is slow and sometimes cumbersome, resulting in a weakened position on some issues; and (4) may, due to differences among organizations, be prevented from taking as strong a stand or moving as swiftly as possible on an issue.

Another common problem is that a participant will try to steer the coalition to a decision that will benefit primarily that one member. Consequently, the California State Department of Education advises the coalition to "avoid exclusiveness or domination by any one particular type of group."

Martin-McCormick claims that, in the case of a coalition formed around a particular campaign issue, the most difficult problem may be that coalition members will conflict on issues not central to the campaign. Thus she advises the campaign coordinators and other coalition leaders

> to keep everyone focused on the campaign and its plans. Acknowledge that member organizations are involved in other things and rightly so, but be clear that those issues and involvements are for their time outside the campaign.

Even the coalition's meeting place can be a source of contention. A neutral site is preferable. The Public Education Fund Network suggests that the coalition establish a distinct physical presence in the community by having an office and a meeting place not in a school, but in the community, such as the chamber of commerce or a corporate center.

To withstand the tensions that occur in any group decision-making process, participants should brush up on their interpersonal communications and conflict resolution skills. Perhaps a representative from the school district, such as a counselor, could lead the group in some communications and conflict resolution exercises.

If members might be insensitive to particular cultural differences that exist in the group, the following recommendtions by the California State Department of Education are appropriate:

> Create an environment supportive of differences in attitudes and appearances of the coalition members.
>
> Appreciate verbal and nonverbal forms of expression based on ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and other differences.
>
> Be tuned in to subtle signs of disaffection or lack of participation that may be directly related to group differences.

Black advises the coalition to "pull together rather than work on a hierarchical basis." Because the coalition could be likened to a small United Nations of sovereign states, decisions must be made through the consent of all participants. To help build unity, the component organizations should periodically express their commitment to the coalition's work and goals.

Although close interpersonal relationships can help the coalition to function smoothly, members must realize the coalition is not a club. The members represent their respective organizations, Black points out, and therefore they must, on any issue, state the organization's opinions, which may not necessarily conform to their own. Those who propose an issue should not take for granted the way an individual will vote. Instead, they should sound out each member's opinion as a voting representative, and in that way be better aware of how a proposal might fare.

Robert Freeman gives some additional suggestions of steps coalitions can follow to operate with minimum conflict from their inception:

- determine the appropriate function for each member organization in the coalition, distinct from what it did before being in the coalition
- build into the coalition sufficient rewards for each member organization
- establish improved working relationships and control mechanisms
- determine whether or how the coalition should be expanded to include more resource agencies and more target groups
- fund the coalition on a long term basis
- maximize integration of efforts while providing necessary autonomy
- set priorities for approaching various audiences for support
- evaluate effectiveness with specific audiences, as an organizational structure, with the general public

As with any cooperative activity, an awareness of potential difficulties serves to focus attention on productive ways to help the group accomplish its purpose. Motivating the members to work together harmoniously is the realization that they can attain goals that are beyond the reach of each member working alone.

Communication between District and Coalition

Another prerequisite for the effective functioning of an educational coalition is ongoing communication between the coalition and the schools it is intended to support. Maintaining such communication can itself be hazardous, because, as the Committee for Economic Development notes, "schools and businesses differ in the ways in which people work." Collaborative efforts involving business and school-based personnel must take these differences in style and expectations into account in order to avoid conflicts.

One difference, for example, is the time frame in which participants are accustomed to working. The business person, used to fast-paced meetings and quick decisions, may have to learn to be patient and wait somewhat longer to see results. In turn, as Dierdorff points out, the school district should also recognize that the desired results require a group of action-oriented people who do not want to waste time; therefore, timeliness must be readied and projects completed as promised in a "business-like" manner.

One effective way to facilitate collaboration between the coalition and the district is to have the district designate some personnel as "linkage agents." These agents will establish regular stable patterns of contact between members of the coalition and the district. In small communities, the superintendent or another designated administrator might be able to provide this linkage, whereas in larger settings where coalitions embrace many different groups, the task will have to be shared among several agents. In one large school district, for example, the principals take turns attending meetings of neighborhood associations and then write up summaries of the meetings for distribution to other administrators in the district.

Whether the district has one linkage agent or many, what matters is that each agent is fully committed to his or her role as a bridge between the school district and the segment of the community with which he or she interacts. The agent must also keep in mind that the coalition and its component groups, while committed to the improvement of the district and its programs, are not a part of the administrative structure of the district. This mutual understanding of and respect for the roles and the expertise of all participants will be crucial to the coalition's operation and projects.

From this survey of the steps involved in initiating and operating formally organized coalitions, we now go on to consider how school leaders can interact with particular constituencies whose support is critical for the success of schools.

Obtaining the Support of Key Groups

The report *A Nation at Risk* concluded with the plea

> that all segments of our population give attention to the implementation of our recommendations. . . . Reform of our educational system will take time and unwavering commitment. Help should come from students themselves; from parents, teachers and school boards; from colleges and universities; from local, State, and Federal officials; from teachers' and administrators' organizations; from industrial and labor councils; and from other groups with interest in and responsibility for educational reform.

As well as encouraging the community to become involved in school reform, this language is also an invitation for school leaders to go to the community for help in the process of school improvement. In a community that already has a high level of concern for the quality of its educational system, people will welcome the offer of specific opportunities to assist their schools. Even in communities where such concern is lacking, school administrators can generate support through many of the suggestions presented here. The following sections explain how to contact and elicit support from parents, the community in general, members of the power structure, school advisory councils, key communicators, local businesses, school board members, and government agencies.

Parents

Undoubtedly, the group most affected by what goes on in schools and most likely to lend their support is parents. David Green calls parent/teacher organizations "gold mines," if an administrator knows how to extract ore from them effectively. By making school facilities available to parents for extracurricular and enrichment activities, he says, a Connecticut grade school was able to build a strong, supportive school/community relationship. Some of the activities cosponsored by the school and the parent-teacher organization included an advanced reading program, computer literacy assistance, minicourses, and a school beautification program.

Lew Armistead says parent-teacher conferences and open houses at the school are effective ways for parents to meet teachers and learn about the school. The trick, he says, is to get them to attend. Initially, it may be helpful to survey parents to find out what would interest them. The survey should cover a good cross-section of parents, not just PTA officers or the presidents of booster organizations.

When trying to encourage parents to attend school events, students can be your best salespeople, Armistead says. The success of this strategy rests on communicating the importance of the event to the students. Once this is accomplished, you can then rely on them to recruit their parents. The event should involve activities that would, in turn, encourage students to attend with their parents.

Armistead suggests beginning an evening program with student entertainment or a simple, inexpensive dinner—possibly a popular food such as spaghetti. Bands, choruses, or glee clubs can be of enormous help, he says, but an imaginative administrator can also enlist the help of home economics classes in the food preparation, making it more of a whole-school program. At the same time, this experience gives students practical hands-on experience and allows everyone—musical and nonmusical students, alike—to make a contribution and be involved.

Since much of what parents learn about schools comes from the children, one obvious way to improve the quality of that information is to make the children more effective news-gatherers. Some schools, for example, have begun programs in which lower-grade children make daily entries in journals. In this way, the children have a clearer, more detailed, often more interesting answer to the familiar parental question: What did you do today? Since praise is more pleasant than criticism, some schools personally contact parents about their children's successes, instead of reserving such contact for discussion of disciplinary or academic problems.

George Pawlas suggests additional means of making positive contact with parents: written comments by the principal on students' papers, a monthly principal's newsletter, a student reading program, the organization of a school improvement council (which includes parents and students as members), and parental visits and lunches at the school.

The implication of these stratagems is clear: few parents fail to feel empathy or support for educators after they have visited schools or classrooms in person. Once the educator—teacher, principal, or staff member—has a face and a name, actual support is more likely, including encouragement for their students to work harder at school.

The Community

Whereas parents have a direct stake in the success of their school system, other members of the community may have to be convinced that a strong educational system is also in their own interest. By reaching out to segments of the community that have no direct ties to the schools, school leaders can turn apathy or even opposition into active supports.

Schools that have succeeded in forging strong ties with their communities have used five major strategies, say Bruce Wilson and Gretchen Rossman, who examined data collected by the U.S. Department of Education's "Secondary Schools Recognition Program." Schools having strong "collaborative links" with their communities follow this pattern:

- *They actively recruit human resources.* The schools seek volunteers to perform clerical duties, serve as nurse assistants, and teach special skills.
- *They have aggressive PR programs.*
- *They use staff members who are also good communicators as fund raisers.*
- *They invite the community into classrooms and send staff and students into the community.* Students visit nursing homes, assist local charities, and stage musical performances for local recreation departments. In turn, school facilities are open to numerous community social activities.
- *They establish an identity for the school.* Schools use signs at roadsides, fly school flags all over town, and use other means to identify the school with the community.

The outcome of these strategies, say Wilson and Rossman, is a general strengthening of the school, which is able to tap an enormous pool of expertise, multiply its resources, and often greatly improve programs at little or no extra cost.

Larry Hughes and Gerald Ubben advise school leaders to let the community in to the schools. A series of properly organized seminars, attended by people from a cross-section of attitudes and orientations in the community, may be a good way to begin, even if they are actually "gripe sessions" initially. Once underway, this approach lays the groundwork for more sophisticated community involvement programs, and the principal doesn't have to do it all: the discussions can be led by well-informed, well-briefed staff members who are effective discussion leaders.

Committees of citizens, students, and staff can work simultaneously on various educational issues without impinging on either the power of the principal or the school board, say Hughes and Ubben. This type of citizen involvement, the authors say, eases professional workload, dispels apathy, and often leads to valuable solutions.

Steve Toy, superintendent of a small school district in Idaho, cites the example of community involvement in goal setting. In the school district, parents, nonparents, teachers, students, and staff members set goals for themselves to help the district in its "Quest for Excellence." As part of the program, each group of goal setters meets with the superintendent to discuss the goals, and the meeting is followed up by a letter. In this way goals are set that relate to curriculum, standards, expectations, requirements, instructional content and instructional process, quality of performance, community support, available resources, and self-responsibility.

A study of the overall programs for community relations isolated two important intangible qualities, says Toy: personal good will and enthusiasm. This may be because, in a small community, what people do and how they feel affect how well the school runs and how the community feels about it. The enthusiasm is contagious, says Toy, but it must begin at the top and be allowed to "infect" the rest of the community. To do that, he says, you have to share the excitement with everyone involved.

School leaders who successfully involve their communities must be able to make sensitive use of people and their talents, writes Louise Phillipp. It also takes a good eye, she says: you have to be able to pick people out of groups of parents, advocates, public agencies and services, clubs, organizations, schools, health facilities, public officials, government agencies, the clergy, businesses, and professions—people who influence decisions, wherever they are, and who instigate and support action for programs.

The Power Structure

Power, a necessary function in society, is distributed in unequal degrees throughout communities informally or formally, says sociologist Floyd Hunter. Informal power is often held by an elite at the top of their respective social and occupational hierarchies in the form of decision-making capabilities. They are the people you see if you are trying to promote some community program. Without their help, any such project would be risky. Formal power generally resides in elected or appointed officials. In fact, however, people who are *informally* powerful in a community—although they would not seek or hold an office—nevertheless *influence* those who do.

In a pluralistic society, the schools must serve many publics, each with differing values, emphases, and orientations. According to Hughes and Ubben, the bad news is that it's impossible to encapsulate the kind of organization of power that exists, because few communities reflect that kind of stability. The good news is that the power relationships are not completely random. Although the patterns of influence aren't static, they do have enough stability that you can learn to predict them, after awhile.

Don Bagin, Donald Ferguson, and Gary Marx describe three levels of leadership in a community:

- Visible Leaders—easiest to identify, include people always on committees, councils, drives, plus elected officials.
- Invisible Leaders—harder to identify, often behind the scenes, such as with large financial interests in the community, or with influence in significant political groups within the community; not usually office seekers but involved in getting others elected; selective in allowing names used for endorsements.
- Emerging Leaders—"heirs apparent" who will assume control when current leaders complete terms of office. Many communities recruit, train and mentor these people as a "good investment" in the future.

Educators should be the community's intellectual leaders, Bagin and his colleagues believe, and make a strong connection in the community's collective mind between *learning* and *people in schools*. As a means of identifying community leaders and working with them to build a positive relationship, they say, educators should involve themselves in such things as the local chamber of commerce, charity drives, boards, commissions, and the political system. In the process, the authors observe, there will be ample opportunity for educators to show citizens how the schools can help improve the community and how schools will be affected by proposed changes. The result, in time of need, is a situation in which the educator will be able to turn to colleagues for help, instead of complete strangers.

Advisory Councils

In many school districts, advisory councils are considered a necessity, because some government programs require community participation in school decision-making processes. Some of these groups have an actual vote; others are strictly advisory. In either case, introduction of citizen committees into the school's decision process represents a major change that may make some administrators uncomfortable. Beyond possible extra work and potential frustration advisory councils bring, however, are some clear benefits for administrators seeking public support.

Every community evaluates its schools. The advantage of an advisory council is that it channels public evaluation toward a constructive end. Criticism—based, as it often is, on vague or incomplete understanding—can be reduced when school administrators have a forum where they can respond. Council members with clear facts about the school's strengths and weaknesses can use this same forum to pass their information along to the rest of the community.

But advisory councils or *ad hoc* committees are much more than mere arenas for disseminating school policy or airing collective gripes. The functions of such groups range from determining and prioritizing school objectives to evaluating progress, investigating facility use, and revising curriculum.

Advisory groups also provide a formal process by which opinions from the community can be incorporated into school decisions. With this current, accurate information about their community's needs and expectations, administrators are obviously in a better position to make "good calls" in terms of their decisions.

One of the important factors relating to an advisory council's success or failure as a communications medium is its composition. Ideally, these groups should represent a cross-section of the community. Diversity is not only a plus, here; it is essential.

As Jim Stanton and his colleagues point out, most councils suffer from shortages of minority, low-income, student, nonparent, and (except in leadership positions) male representation. To fill these needs, the active recruitment of these groups will be a necessity. Their past experiences may have made them reluctant to participate in school affairs, or even antagonistic toward the schools. Sometimes these experiences and a lack of confidence in their communications skills when placed alongside more affluent, educated people, may also make them impatient in waiting for changes or unwilling to volunteer for school-related groups. Their recruitment is still a high priority, however.

It's also important to recruit individuals with expertise in areas the council will be considering. Necessary qualities in all participants include interest, time, and the ability to get along with people.

The best way to attract and keep council members is to appeal to their self-interest and demonstrate that they can make a difference. Often, simply asking people to serve on a council or run for office is enough to show them that their services are needed and valued.

Convening an advisory council will thoroughly test the leadership skills of any principal, writes C.C. Carpenter. The principal's most important function will be, on the one hand, to keep the level of participation up and to generate enthusiasm, energy, and activity. On the other hand, the principal must make the council aware of its limits and responsibilities, as well as the possibilities open to it. Governing a citizens advisory council will entail such skills as leading meetings, managing conflict, and sharing power, as well as solving problems alone and jointly with the group and communicating effectively.

Key Communicators

Every community has people who are asked questions about everything—city government, election issues, investments, rising prices, and the local schools. They are respected members of their communities, and educators need to keep them current on school issues and events. Lew Armistead suggests such things as inviting them to school events—an award assembly, a musical or dramatic performance, an athletic event, or a school meeting—as well as putting them on your school's mailing lists. Some schools recruit them as communications or community relations committees.

These "key communicators" are people who talk to large numbers of people, and whom people (again, in large numbers) believe and trust. Key communicators don't have to have high status or membership in some power structure—they are found in the ranks of all professions and trades, and in positions at many levels in the community. They can be barbers and beauticians or mayors and councilors.

The idea works either for individual schools or for the district as a whole, as well as *within* the schools: key communicators can also be members of the student body or your own staff, since both are prime sources of information about the school. If you are effective in making sure your key communicators have accurate information before they share it with people outside the school, say Bagin and colleagues, they can "identify the sparks before they become fires," in terms of rumors and other misinformation. Although it takes time to set up a network of key communicators, most administrators agree that it saves more time than it costs once it's in place and functioning.

This very lack of time that makes it impossible to make more than token contact with the public-at-large makes it mandatory that schools identify and contact the key communicators in their own communities. Cultivation of key communicators can be done informally—with periodic phone calls to discuss school affairs or invitations to lunch at school—or by establishing a formal group and meeting with it regularly.

Because they can generally reach a lot of people quickly, timely contact with them during potential crises can often help defuse controversy, avoid trouble, and deal quickly and effectively with misconceptions about the school.

Because communication is a two-way process, key influentials can also *bring in* information: accurate, immediate feedback on how the community is responding to the school. This feedback can give administrators new perspectives on their schools (as well as their own management styles) and make it easier to identify potential problems and areas of dissension. In addition, these people can often serve as sounding boards, enabling administrators to test public reaction to new ideas in advance.

Local Businesses

In recent years, writes Santee Ruffin, urban education has been returning to what can be called the "educational mainstream." Observers note a return of such things as an emphasis on professional accountability and on the principal as the instructional leader, as well as a return to a stronger school/business relationship.

"Long-term economic growth is tied directly to the performance of public education," Richard Lesher, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, was quoted as saying in 1985. U.S. businesses have rallied to the standard of education as the key to not only a sound economy but the overall quality of life in their communities. Consequently, business leaders are actively seeking partnerships with educators.

Bagin, Ferguson and Marx caution that such plans must be carefully thought out and candidly discussed to avoid destructive misunderstandings and crucial loss of ground. Further, the authors point out that most educators will *not* be dealing with large corporations, since most communities have mostly small businesses: 90 percent of all U.S. businesses have fewer than 50 employees.

Again, say Bagin and colleagues, it's a matter of getting to know groups and individuals within this sector:

- Determine what local businesses expect from schools.
- Survey businesses in the area.
- Learn local businesses' perception of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Find out what skills graduates will need to get available jobs.

A wise educator is one who works to show businesses how they can benefit from the schools through additional services such as adult education, community education, or retraining programs. Bagin and his colleagues recommend an early investigation based on one basic question: What can you do for them?

They suggest inviting businesspeople to survey their employees and managers about what kind of additional training or classes they would like, adding those offerings to the adult/community education program, and accommodating these courses in the schools.

For their part, businesses typically have helped schools through such practices as these:

- corporate loan of executives to schools
- analysis of school business and personnel practices in a consultant or advisory capacity
- service as resource people in classrooms
- design of curricula
- financial, material, and human resource support through Adopt-A-School-type programs

In many cases, the business community has invited students into its domain through tours, internships, and special projects. Beyond preparing students for future jobs and careers, Bagin and his coauthors point out, businesses have also promoted and actually provided immediate and/or short term, entry-level employment for students.

Perhaps most important for the educator to remember, say Bagin and colleagues, is the natural tendency for schools and businesses to ally. Both are concerned with the long- and short-term community life. Political alliances, for example, are valuable in building support for better schools in the state legislature, as well as before school bond or finance elections.

The authors warn against too great a dependence on business support, however. Contributions from businesses obviously help, but the bulk of school support should come from taxpayers. Differences in size and finances between businesses from one community to the next could lead to greater inequities with regard to the resources for schools. Businesses should always supplement, not supplant, financial support from the community.

School Boards

When school leaders seek to build support for education, they should not overlook school board members, who are important elements in the coalition-building process. Armistead, one of several authors who regard school boards as another, distinct portion of the surrounding community, suggests tapping into your own school resources as a way of building good will between the two offices and strengthening the bond between board and principal. Have the school glee club or chorus perform a few songs at one of the less hectic board meetings, for example.

Board members, as elected representatives, have their own followings in the community and, if they are good representatives, are aware of their constituents' views. By being aware of board members in this capacity, administrators can use the board to sound out public opinion and to serve as a channel for communicating school needs to particular segments of the community.

For instance, school boards can communicate effectively with other governing bodies. Steve Toy writes that the Oxford, New York, board of education meets three times a year with the town board and the village board. These "tri-board" meetings have provided a means to increase community involvement in the schools.

Government Agencies

Contact with elected officials has indeed become an extremely important role, not only of the school board, but of school and district administration. As the elected office's scope and power increase, so does its impact on local education—whether it's an agency providing federal money, a regulation that causes unending problems, or a state action that actually makes it easier to provide top quality education. Either way—curse or blessing—government relations have come to be a top priority for administrators.

Bagin, Ferguson, and Marx provide some helpful guidelines for administrators who take seriously their role of influencing the public decision-making process. Whether your district has a key administrator who handles legislative or governmental relations, or whether it doesn't, the authors say, it's not possible to rely completely on one person or group for this important service. Although professional associations and unions play a crucial role in government relations efforts, all school employees must shoulder part of the load.

According to Bagin and his coauthors, government relations involves a variety of efforts:

- Developing cooperative relationships with organizations that share a concern about legislative issues affecting education
- Providing leadership in issues that reach a governmental level of concern
- Working with regulatory agencies and various members of local, state and federal bureaucracies
- Grassroots lobbying activities
- Formation of coalitions focused on issues that have reached governmental level of concern
- Working with non-legislative groups whose support for or against legislation might be needed
- Responding to media inquiries about issues before legislative bodies
- Maintaining contact with political leaders to monitor their stands on educational issues, and sometimes influencing those positions
- Monitoring legislative trends in other communities
- Allying with professional associations and unions for a stronger voice in educational policy-making

Ideally, the school system's goal may be to influence, mitigate, or even lead the process of developing government policy and programs that relate to education, say Bagin and colleagues. Often, however, issues that have reached the decision-making stage in the legislature place the educational institutions in a reactive position: they can only try to limit, control, and repair damage already done. Because of this, say the authors, it's important for educators to keep current and maintain contacts with elected and/or appointed officials. The authors suggest conducting periodic surveys and generally "keeping an ear to the ground." It is also very useful to monitor issues, noting those that could trigger legislative action as they progress, because this changes the educational institution's position from *reactive* to *proactive*. It is better, the authors suggest, to have a hand in shaping educational policy than to be limited to simply reacting.

A proactive government relations program could include these actions:

- writing/initiating legislation cooperatively with elected officials or governmental departments
- negotiating with other groups, governmental departments, and

decision-makers toward issue consensus

- researching potential effects of specific legislation or regulations
- working closely with regulators after the legislative decision is made
- providing expert information and analysis on issues under consideration by government officials
- preparing, coordinating, and providing testimony

School administrators, board members, and parent group representatives can take active roles in this process, say the authors, whether the goal is influencing members of Congress or of the state legislature with regard to issue positions.

Although "lobbying" may have a dirty or unsavory reputation, associated with graft, bribery, and corruption, its primary purpose is "to provide elected and appointed decision-makers with the information they need to make sound decisions," say Bagin and his coauthors. The lobbyist should avoid or minimize "intuitive decision-making" on governmental issues ("Let me tell you what I think my people would say about this") and instead convey knowledge of the subject, process, and constituency. Organized and trained volunteers and a communications network are essential, they say.

To present an official position on an issue with supportable evidence, the authors recommend following these steps:

- Analyzing the issue: What is its potential impact on the school district and programs? Can the impact be measured? What will the impact mean, in terms of funds, staffing programs and the like?
- Analyzing the players: What other groups will be affected? Who is the opposition? What are its positions, strengths, weaknesses? Who are the people behind the issues, and what are their voting records on similar issues? Who are the allies and potential members of coalitions? What is necessary for success? What do you lose, if you fight and win?
- Knowing the process and laws: What is the decision-making process for the group with which you are working? What steps do proposals go through? What happens if it is killed along the way?

Bagin and his colleagues remind us that the process is not over when a particular issue is resolved, a bill passed, or a law changed. As with other groups, government officials or agencies are part of a long-term working relationship, much as other groups already discussed in this chapter. Maintain the contact, say the authors, and things move more smoothly. Invite them to come see you, and go and see them regularly. Write to them, and make sure that they are well-informed about your school and what happens in it.

Conclusion

We have outlined two different but related patterns for building coalitions of groups supportive of the schools. One strategy is to form an organization of diverse groups who share the goal of strengthening the community's public educational system. Having chosen a mission for the coalition, the coalition builder identifies and recruits potential members and, if appropriate for the type of coalition that is desired, establishes a governing board. If the coalition's activities require that members work closely together, then the coalition builder or a designated coordinator has the added responsibility of facilitating the decision-making process and helping the members work harmoniously.

Because of their visibility and coordinated efforts, formally organized coalitions can raise the public's consciousness and carry out projects that are beyond the reach of the schools with their limited resources. But such coalitions also require a lot of time and effort to form and operate, and thus they may be feasible only for larger school districts.

An alternative strategy for obtaining the public's support for schools is a less formal process that can be successfully applied in a community of any size and can take as much or little time as a school leader wishes to invest. Instead of recruiting members to an organization, the coalition builder targets particular segments of the community and reaches out to them in an effort to increase their understanding of the schools and solicit their support. We have described a number of techniques school leaders can use to establish those kinds of informal networks with groups ranging from parents to elected local and state officials.

Although their methods differ, both strategies have the same goal: to form alliances with groups external to the schools whose support can help to build a stronger educational system.

Chapter 13

Leading Meetings

John Lindelow
James Heynderickx

"Our meetings are so boring! We never seem to get anything done."

"The same people make the decisions all the time, and no one else gets involved."

"Why should we bother when most of our decisions never get carried through. No one remembers who's responsible for what and our plans are forgotten."

"As often as the principal says he wants us to be involved, he always seems to have things work out his way."

How often have you heard similar conversations take place after supposedly productive meetings? Why do so many meetings seem to be a waste of time for their participants? In addition to being unproductive for the school, they give individuals little personal satisfaction; in fact, research indicates that meetings can become a major source of dissatisfaction in an organization.

How can meetings become unproductive or even counterproductive? Meetings, of course, are only a part of the total workings of the school organization. What takes place in a meeting is often a reflection of the attitudes, relationships, and organization of the larger school system. "Every meeting is a microcosm," says Richard Dunsing, "a condensed version of the values and style of the organization."

Meetings may be shaped by the norms of the system in which they take place, but what takes place in meetings can generate a "ripple effect" on the rest of the organization. "A meeting of fifteen people," say Michael Doyle and David Straus, "can affect how 300 people work--or don't work--for the rest of the day or week or even permanently." Well-run meetings can rejuvenate an organization, leading to improved teamwork, communication, and morale on many levels. A poor meeting, on the other hand, can have a debilitating effect on an entire organization.

The problem of unproductive meetings is usually part of the larger problem of ineffective organization. Government and nonprofit organizations seem most prone to "sluggish" organizational operation, one reason being the lack of direct personal reward for increasing efficiency. It is no accident that the great majority of literature on improving meetings comes from the profit- and survival-oriented business world.

Contributing to the problem of ineffective meetings is a simple lack of organizational and human-relation skills. Most of these skills are as old as meetings themselves, such as dealing with the long-winded participant, creating an agenda and sticking to it, and ensuring that responsibilities are assigned and deadlines set.

Robert Maidment and William Bullock, Jr. note that the primary distinction between efficiency and effectiveness is that of "doing the job right" and "doing the right job." Unfortunately, the first does not ensure the latter, as proved by the occurrence of "efficient meetings that yielded totally ineffective outcomes." Social scientists in the field of group dynamics have been studying for decades the interactions of group members to determine how the communications process can be improved. And in the behavioral sciences, a procedure called *organizational development* examines the whole of the communications structures of organizations. Both of these fields have shed new light on ways to make meetings more effective.

This chapter presents many suggestions aimed at helping educators improve their performance in meetings, both as group leaders and as participants. Before getting involved with the more practical aspects of meeting management, however, we examine the importance of establishing clear-cut goals and values for your meetings.

Goals and Values of Meetings

There is a set of simple questions that every meeting planner should consider before calling a meeting: What do I want to accomplish with this meeting? What goals and objectives do I wish to reach? Is a meeting the best route to my goal, or might another form of communication be more efficient? What are the other values in meetings in addition to the obvious practical ends they achieve? Each of these questions will be considered in turn.

Meetings with Purpose

"No wind favors him who has no destined port," goes the old saying. Yet how many meetings have you attended that have drifted pointlessly with no obvious goals or purposes to guide them. Every meeting needs one or more definite purposes that are known to all group members, and it is best when members are actively involved in determining what those purposes will be.

Most meetings take place for one or more of the following reasons:

- to receive or give information
- to make a decision
- to define, analyze, or solve a problem
- to reconcile conflicts
- to express feelings (for example, a gripe-session or rap-session)

Perhaps the most common complaint concerning meetings is that there are too many of them. Participants begin to feel that they are present only to take part in an organizational ritual. "One-way, information-giving meetings," states Jack Whitehead, Jr., "can seldom be justified as either efficient or effective." The most important purpose of any meeting may be that of "exchanging information and opinion and obtaining commitments for action."

Information

Some meetings are designed primarily for the exchange of information among participants. The meeting leader may want simply to brief or instruct members, as in a training session. Conversely, the leader may want to receive reports from participants. In this type of meeting, a more autocratic leadership style is usually the most efficient.

The most important advantage of an information meeting over a memo or written report is that reaction and feedback can be immediate. Every member can hear the information presented and the reaction of all other members to it. According to Nicholas Criscuolo, however, too many information meetings can cause teachers to complain, especially when meetings are called to relate routine announcements that could best be presented in "a bulletin or via the school's public address system."

Another problem with information meetings, according to Barbara and Kenneth Palmer, is that too many meeting leaders fail to recognize the importance of "dejargonizing and personalizing content." The best way to deal with complex information is to personalize it by relating how it will significantly affect the students in the school or the working atmosphere of the members of the meeting. "Directed role play" can be used to this end by creating a mental scenario of changes that may take place. The end goal, of course, is to reduce confusion and to stimulate interest and attention.

Decision-Making

Decision-making style ranges from the autocratic to the truly democratic. An autocrat may simply wish to get some input from participants before making a decision. In meetings with a more democratic style of decision-making, everyone who has a critical stake in a decision is given a chance to be heard and to influence the final decision.

Problem-Solving

Several heads are usually better than one, particularly for defining, analyzing, and solving problems. In a problem-solving session, a group can combine "the bits and pieces of experience and insight which may lead to a common understanding," says B. Y. Auger. "One person may describe an effect, while another suggests a plausible reason for it." Out of this pattern of exchange, an acceptable cause-and-effect relationship may be discovered.

Problem-solving sessions can also help to correct the flaws and idiosyncracies in the thinking of individuals. An effective group may be flexible and wide-ranging in its thought, but at the same time sift out impractical or far-flung ideas.

Leadership style can vary widely in problem-solving meetings, depending on the nature of the problem, time limitations, and other variables. For example, a brainstorming session might be called to foster ideas for increasing community awareness of certain school programs. In such a session, a very informal, democratic atmosphere would be needed to stimulate a variety of ideas. If, on the other hand, the analysis of a problem calls for an orderly presentation of data and some hard thinking, a more leader-controlled meeting would be more efficient.

Reconciling Conflicts

A meeting is often the only place to explore sharp differences of opinion and to negotiate some kind of compromise. This type of meeting requires tight control so that tempers do not flare. If the conflict does not directly affect the group leader, he or she can work primarily as a facilitator, bringing out and clarifying points of contention, making sure that each side's case is fully heard, and hammering out compromises. When the group leader is one of the principal contenders, it is necessary (and sometimes required by law) to appoint a neutral third party to manage the conflict.

The three primary channels for resolving conflict, according to the Palmers, are *force*, *arbitration*, and *mediation* or *negotiation*. If a conflict in a meeting is limited to three or fewer members, it may best be solved directly by force—the group leader simply states and enforces a decision. When a larger group of participants are in conflict over a relatively simple problem, the leader should use arbitration or a vote of all members to end the discussion with a decision.

But when a meeting's participants voice sharply different ideas and viewpoints on an important issue, the Palmers say that the only fair and efficient way to resolve conflict is through mediation or negotiation. Time must be invested "to explore all aspects of the dispute or conflict, look at a full range of alternatives for resolving the conflict, and work toward a mutually agreeable decision," they state. When a leader is perceived to be less than absolutely neutral in a decision, it is important that the more democratic channels for resolution are used.

The resolution of personal conflicts should not be attempted during meetings, nor should the group leader discipline or reprimand organizational members while a meeting is in progress. Such actions, when necessary, are best carried out through individual meetings and actions.

Expressing Feelings

It is often useful to hold gripe-sessions or rap-sessions with staff members to sound out their feelings about the organization and its administration. Such meetings should be as permissive and unstructured as possible, for they are important steam valves for an organization. The leader should remain in the background and allow members to contribute spontaneously.

When teachers feel that meetings they attend are meaningless or boring, Criscuolo suggests that administrators involve participants in setting agenda topics. One way is to form a committee to research and present agenda topics and themes felt to be of particular importance. Even a simple action, such as placing a blackboard or clipboard in the faculty lounge for teachers to write down possible topics or issues for the next staff meeting, can enable participants to become more involved in meetings. The strategic placing of "favored" topics can also help maintain interest and involvement during mundane but necessary items on the agenda.

Is a Meeting Necessary?

The best way to reduce the huge amount of time wasted in meetings is to ask the simple question of whether the goals of the meeting might be reached in some other, more efficient way. Too many meetings are called simply because it's that time of the week or month. "An effective leader," Whitehead states, "will consider whether 6 ten-minute one-on-one meetings with individuals would be more effective than bringing them all together for a single meeting." Memos or telephone calls (individual or conference) can often accomplish the communication desired without the time and expense of a meeting.

A general rule of thumb is that meetings should not be called when an individual decision-maker can get better results. Individuals are more efficient when the matters to be decided are routine and, surprisingly, when the decision depends on the use of subtle, hard-to-explain reasoning that cannot be done spontaneously. "Research indicates that subtle reasoning problems are generally performed more accurately by individuals than by meetings," reports Barry Maude. "The great danger of presenting difficult reasoning problems to meetings to solve is that the competent members (those who know how to solve the problem) may be out-voted or even convinced by the rest."

When meeting planners neglect to consider cost effectiveness, Whitehead notes, "the amount of funds being allocated in the meeting" can be "exceeded by the total cost of the hourly rates of the individuals making the decision." The Palmers' book contains several worksheets for quickly computing the costs of a meeting and comparing them with the costs of alternatives, such as a mailed report, a conference call, or individual meetings. The net savings from such alternatives can equal thousands of dollars. An example of such a worksheet, adapting the Palmers' model to the field of education, is included in table 1.

However true this may be in the solving of some problems, meetings often serve as a valuable check on the errors in reasoning of some members. In the broad area between very simple and very complex reasoning tasks, research shows, again according to Maude, that group decisions are more likely to be on target than individual decisions. It is also sensible to reveal as much of the reasoning process as possible to public scrutiny in this era of increasing accountability.

Table 1. Cost Comparison Worksheet

A.	**Meeting Cost**	
	Preparation—by chairperson	
	4 hours @ $25.00 hr. (salary &benefits)	$100.00
	Preparation—by key participants	
	2 participants @ $20.00 hr. x 2 hours	80.00
	Preparation—by other participants	
	6 participants @ $20.00 hr. x .5 hour	60.00
	Preparation—by staff	
	2 staff @ avg. salary of $8.50 hr. x 4 hours	68.00
	Materials/Supplies	
	Printed material $25.00 + refreshment $10.00	35.00
	Meeting Times	
	Chairperson @ $25.00 hr. x 2 hours	50.00
	8 participants @ $20.00 hr. x 2 hours	320.00
	Meeting Cost Total	$713.00
B.	**First Alternative—A fifteen page report**	
	Research/writing/proofreading—by author	
	15 hours @ $20.00 hr. (salary & benefits)	$300.00
	Typing and Correcting—by staff person	
	3 hours @ avg. salary of $8.75 hr.	25.25
	Duplicating	
	9 copies @ $0.60	5.40
	Review—by chairperson	
	1 hour @ $25.00 hr.	25.00
	Review—by recipients	
	.75 hour @ $20.00 hr. x 8 participants	120.00
	First Alternative Total	$475.65
C.	**Second Alternative—Individual consultations with selected individuals**	
	Preparation—by chairperson	
	2 hours @ $25.00 hr. (salary & benefits)	$50.00
	Preparation—by participants	
	1 hours@ $20.00 hr. x 4 participants	80.00
	Printed Materials	15.00
	Meeting Time	
	Chairperson @ $25.00 hr. x 4 hours	100.00
	4 participants @ $20.00 hr. x 1 hour	80.00
	Second Alternative Total	$325.00

Hidden Values of Meetings

Most meetings can achieve more than the organizational goals stated on the agenda. Meetings satisfy, or can satisfy, the personal and emotional needs of individual members, especially those of participation, belonging, achievement, and power. Participants interact, develop roles, and share their experiences, problems, and successes.

Meetings also play an important role in building the cohesiveness of an organization. "In the simplest and most basic way," states Antony Jay, "a meeting defines the team, the group, or the unit. Those present belong to it; those absent do not. Everyone is able to look around and perceive the whole group and sense the collective identity of which he or she forms a part."

Richard Schmuck and his colleagues characterize the values of school meetings as follows:

> Meetings provide an opportunity for participation not found in memos, newsletters, loudspeaker announcements, and the like. They enable an immediate check of reactions to what another person has just said and to one's own immediate utterances as well. If managed effectively, meetings can be the principal channel for bringing staff members into collaboration to reach common understandings and for that reason can be highly productive and satisfying events in the life of an organization.

Basics of Meeting Planning

"Conducting a meeting without a plan," states Jack Parker, "is much like trying to build a house without blueprints. It can be done, of course, but the end result is likely to be less than desirable and the process can be expensive and nerve-wracking."

Engineering a successful meeting requires careful strategic planning. The meeting planner should try to imagine what is likely to happen in the meeting from beginning to end, especially barriers that may impede progress. The decided purpose of the meeting should provide a preliminary idea of who will be attending and what might transpire. From that point, the planner should consider the stakes that the meeting participants have in the matters to discuss. How will their personalities and stances affect the course of discussion? What conflicts are likely to develop between participants? Who will be asked to change or adjust, and how might they react?

The purpose of every meeting should be to gather the skills required to solve targeted problems. If the skills are not available within the organization, the meeting planner should consider inviting experts. Once the critical issues on which a decision might hinge are identified, the range of possible compromises can be determined. Every situation is different, but most decisions are made by deciding what can and cannot be traded off.

Other important facets of meeting planning, discussed in the following pages, include writing up the agenda and allotting time for each item, deciding who will attend, arranging the seating, and selecting the meeting room.

The Agenda and Time Considerations

The agenda is the heart of the organizational structure of a meeting. "Without an agenda, the most skilled meeting leader might not be able to bring off a meeting successfully," says B. Y. Auger.

> With an agenda, however, he is able to devote his talents to managing the interplay of personalities in the meeting room. He can do this more effectively because he knows what he wants to achieve. With this general strategy mapped out in the agenda, he can concentrate on the more fluid tactics of the meeting room.

Before a meeting, it is wise to consult with meeting participants to determine what topics need to be on the agenda. Premeeting discussions can sometimes eliminate the need to put a topic on the agenda, saving everyone's time. Early consultation can also stimulate participants to properly prepare for the meeting. To receive participant input, Don Halverson suggests "circulating a skeletal or blank agenda and asking for agenda items."

Once the agenda is complete, it should be distributed to meeting participants. Since participants should have at least twenty-four hours to give careful consideration to meeting topics, the agenda should be distributed one to three days before the meeting. If the agenda is circulated too far in advance, some participants may forget it or lose it.

When a meeting is called on short notice, advance distribution of the agenda may be impossible. On the other hand, early distribution may be necessary for an elaborate meeting or one requiring detailed preparation.

In addition to the agenda, any necessary background information should be distributed to participants before the meeting. "High quality information leads to high quality decisions," says Maude, and prevents a discussion from becoming "a mere pooling of ignorance." Brief and concise background information can allow participants to consider matters carefully in advance and formulate useful questions. The information may be best summarized by the meeting planner after receiving a complete review of background data from each person who will make a presentation at the meeting.

The agenda should include definite starting and ending times of the meeting. Since participants have other responsibilities and appointments to attend to, it is only common courtesy that they know when the meeting will be over.

Meetings should also have an internal structuring of time. When estimating the amount of time for each agenda item, the meeting planner should consider again whether the topics are worthy of consideration. Whitehead notes that meetings often correspond to "a type of Parkinson's Law in which the length of time it takes to reach a decision expands to the amount of time available." Trivial problems should be resolved quickly, but it is best when the group itself decides upon time limitations for discussions and resolves simple decisions in as few minutes as possible. All should agree to limit useless discussion and avoid any superfluous additions.

When a meeting is held to resolve a complex problem, the group can avoid wasting a lot of time if it agrees in advance to follow a particular problem-solving strategy. For instance, Ken Blanchard outlines the "Ross Four-Step Agenda" developed by Ray Ross:

1. Define and limit the problem.
2. Determine the nature of the problem and its causes.
3. Establish and rank the criteria for solutions.
4. Evaluate and select solutions.

Such a systematic process helps the group to focus objectively on the clarification and solution of a problem.

Another aspect of meeting design that can be altered to achieve desired ends is the order of agenda items. Urgent items, of course, need to come before those that can wait. But if some items might divide members, and others might unite them, the meeting planner can vary their order to produce, hopefully, a smoother running meeting. In any case, it is always a good idea to end each meeting with a unifying item. Antony Jay makes these suggestions concerning the order of agenda items:

> The early part of a meeting tends to be more lively and creative than the end of it, so if an item needs mental energy, bright ideas, and clear heads, it may be better to put it high up on the list. Equally, if there is one item of great interest and concern to everyone, it may be a good idea to hold it back for a while and get some other useful work done first. Then the star item can be introduced to carry the meeting over the attention lag that sets in after the first 15 to 20 minutes of the meeting.

The overall length of meetings can also affect the quality of decision-making that takes place. Meetings that are scheduled to last longer than an hour may best be separated into a set of shorter meetings. Similar topics can be clustered in each meeting, allowing a smaller number of participants.

Meetings are not likely to remain productive after two hours. As Frank Snell points out, "Clear thinking falters as the clock goes round, and in turn, emotions take over. Weariness breeds dissension and contrariness." The ideal length seems to be from an hour to an hour and a half. If the meetings must be held for longer periods, be sure to provide coffee and fresh air breaks.

In addition to the meeting date, starting and ending times, and the place where the meeting is to be held, the agenda should contain a brief description of each topic, the objective desired for each topic (for example, decision, discussion, information), the name of the person responsible for each topic (who should introduce the item at the meeting), and an estimation of the time allotment for that item.

To encourage greater involvement and attention, Willard Fox recommends that each significant topic be given one page in the agenda. The topic is stated at the top of the page, followed by the name of the person who submitted the item for discussion. The remainder of the page includes decision alternatives, as well as an open space for participants to record additional alternatives. Providing space for an "Impact Statement," Fox states, allows participants to describe "the anticipated impact on the children, the facilities, the personnel, or the finances" of the school. Finally, at the bottom of the sheet participants can record motions, votes, final decisions, and actions to be taken. A worksheet for developing this type of agenda is presented in table 2. Each member's completed agenda can serve as a useful reminder of what decisions were made and who is responsible for what actions.

Although a firm structure is desirable for effective meetings, the planner should not "overstructure" the meeting. As Auger puts it, "One must not create the impression among the participants that the meeting has been so finally and rigidly preplanned that they are merely assembling to hear a proclamation." Participants should receive the impression "that there is a legitimate need for the meeting and that their views, information and problem-solving talents can be considered." So within the structure of the agenda, a good bit of flexibility is advised.

Who Shall Attend?

Once the desired goals of a meeting are determined, the question of who should participate will be half answered. The search then begins for those who are most affected by the issues to be discussed, those who have to give or receive information at the meeting, and those whose presence is necessary or desirable for decision-making purposes.

It is most important, according to Maude, that meeting participants be chosen from the organizational level most appropriate to deal with the problem. Experienced, upper-level administrators, for example, should be involved in deciding long-term policy issues, since they "have the experience and over-view to grasp the financial implications of a particular decision and to overcome the inherent uncertainty of this kind of long-term decision-making."

In the same respect, middle-level managerial decisions and day-to-day operating decisions should be made at the appropriate level. Maude warns against "inviting people to meetings simply because of their high status in the organisation." One secret of making meetings more efficient, he states, is to "push decisionmaking as far down the organisation as it will go, i.e. to the lowest level competent to handle the problem." This view corresponds directly with the suggestions of Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman noted in chapter 5 ("School-Based Management").

Depending on the goals of your meeting, you can invite either a group with diverse personalities or a more like-minded group. Maude cites evidence

Table 2. Sample Agenda

AGENDA
District C Managers' Conference
9:00 - 10:45 A.M.
Tuesday February 22, 1994
Central Meeting Room

9:00 A.M. Approval of Agenda Al Herbert

9:05 - 9:25 Topic 1:

Shall district lunch program be contracted out next year?
(On the agenda at the request of Ed Freemont)

Alternatives

A.

B.

Other Alternatives

Impact Statement

Motion:

It was moved by ____________________ and seconded
by ______________________________________.

Action: NELSON Y/N SMITH Y/N LEWIS Y/N FREEMONT Y/N
HERBERT Y/N JONES Y/N WILSON Y/N O'NEIL Y/N

Passed __________________________ Failed ______________________

Action To Be Taken:

> that meetings made up of people of unlike personalities often produce better solutions than like-minded groups. The reason may be the wide range of ideas that is likely; or simply that different-minded people tend to disagree and this prevents over-hasty decisions being made.

For creative problem-solving sessions, it may pay to invite a range of people from different levels and backgrounds, perhaps even some "outsiders."

Once the people who might either do the meeting some good or gain something from it are identified, the next step is to pare down the attendee list so it includes only those members whose presence is absolutely necessary. There is universal agreement among meeting-improvement experts that a major reason for poor meetings is that too many people have been invited.

Although the philosophy of the public sector necessitates the use of "participative decision-making" for important decisions, the gathering of twenty or thirty people to "touch all the bases" usually results in unproductive or stagnant meetings. Productive meetings are the result of the right persons discussing one subject at a time. Whitehead notes that a single conversation is difficult to maintain when a meeting has more than eleven members. The most common result is that "several conversations will emerge simultaneously, and the group deteriorates into several smaller groups."

To preserve a "flow of interaction," Whitehead suggests seven or eight members is the best number of participants. Antony Jay states that "between 4 and 7 is generally ideal, 10 is tolerable, and 12 is the outside limit." If a meeting must involve a large number of participants, it may be desirable to create committees or subgroups to work on particular topics.

Groups of four or fewer are more prone to biased decisions, and they lack the "breadth of experience and thinking to deal adequately with complex problems," says Maude. On the other hand, when groups grow to over ten, "an increasing number of people are scared into silence" and "intimate face-to-face contact between all members becomes impossible."

The optimum number for a particular working group is best found by experimentation. The ideal size is one that is large enough to provide the needed expertise to solve a problem, yet is small enough to prevent communications and control problems.

Seating Arrangements

Another factor that the astute meeting planner can vary in designing a successful meeting is the arrangement of attendees in the meeting room. The objective of the meeting should determine the type of seating arrangement in the room, as well as the kind of leadership style the meeting leader chooses. In addition, it will depend on whether the meeting planner wishes to promote or prevent conflict among individuals.

Meetings on important issues often produce the most conflict among participants. This, in turn, often results in a deadlock between two groups in the meeting with no resolution. Kermit Moore researched this phenomenon in a large Philadelphia high school and found without exception that "opposing groups consistently sat together on opposite sides of a large rectangular table." The table was the "no man's land" across which the two opposing factions would repeatedly face off. Individuals would vote as blocks, instead of following the logic of others' arguments and changing points of view.

The solution was to intersperse the opposing groups around a circular table. This eliminated the competitive "face off" and reduced "the space between the participants from a public to a personal distance, fostering cooperation rather than competition," according to Moore.

A group leader can also increase, or decrease, his or her control of the meeting by his position at the table. In Moore's example of placing opposing groups around a circular table, the leader may choose to seat the most disruptive members next to him, since proximity increases control. In the same respect, every meeting seems to have quiet and shy participants who often have intelligent viewpoints and ideas but never make them known. Placing them next to the leader can be one of the best ways to encourage participation.

When it is essential that the meeting be "leader-central," the symbolism is strongest when the leader sits at the head of a long, narrow table. To decrease the chance of a "verbal tennis match" that can occur with a rectangular table, have the leader sit at the middle of a U-shaped arrangement.

If the meeting does not involve social contact, such as an information-giving meeting, the leader can emphasize his or her authority through position, height, and density. The classic arrangement is to place the leader at the front of the room with all other chairs facing the front. This arrangement may be enhanced if the leader is elevated, since "North Americans tend to associate height with status," says Moore. And instead of having your audience spread out in a large number of chairs, a group seated closely together can generate an energy of its own that the leader can use. "To increase audience interest and involvement," Moore suggests, "jam people together in a space that's confining enough to create mild (but no more than mild) irritation in the members of the audience."

In general, however, the meeting planner will want to increase interaction and eye contact among meeting participants. When participants can see one another's faces and read their body language, their mutual understanding will grow. For greatest eye contact, use a U-shaped or circular table.

The Meeting Room

"Surroundings tend to affect the way we think and act," states Auger, "and a poorly arranged and uncomfortable room is not likely to produce meeting results." Common sense, one may answer, yet how many meetings have you attended where something disturbed your concentration, such as an uncomfortable chair, a burnt-out projector bulb, a hot, overcrowded room, or a dance class meeting on the floor directly above? Attention to the physical setting of a meeting may not guarantee a good meeting, but it can prevent a bad one.

The location of your meeting depends on its purpose. For an instructional meeting, a classroom may be the best place. A "ritualistic" meeting should probably be held in the best conference room available. Problem-solving or decision-making meetings need only a simple meeting room. A leader may choose to hold private meetings in his or her own office to gain a "home court" advantage. But "do not hold a decision-making meeting in the office of a high status member," caution Ernest Bormann and his colleagues—the surrounding symbolism is bound to inhibit free communication.

The size of the meeting room should match the size of the group. Maude reports that "the size of the room preferred by most participants is one that gives the impression of being comfortably full—not crowded—when everyone is present and sitting around the table."

Chairs should be comfortable, but not so comfortable that participants are prone to doze off. Electrical sockets should be available for projectors, recorders, and so forth, and the meeting planner should make sure that the correct audiovisual equipment is available and serviceable. Paper and pencils should be in ample supply, and a coffee pot should be nearby. Since teachers are likely to be tired and hungry after a long school day, Robert Maidment and William Bullock suggest simply to "feed the troops." An inexpensive tray of carrot sticks and other snacks can supply surprising motivation potential.

Good acoustics, lighting, and ventilation are other common-sense necessities for a good meeting. A room with poor acoustics or lighting is apt to lull participants to sleep or frustrate them. Poor ventilation can also make group members irritable, especially if there is antagonism between smoking and nonsmoking participants. If that occurs, perhaps the best remedy is to restrict smoking during the meeting altogether.

Incoming telephone calls, late-comers, and outside noises are also common meeting distractions. All calls to meeting participants should be held unless there is an emergency. If there are two or more entrances to the meeting room, only one should be used to minimize interruption by late-comers. And the meeting should be held in a room that is not usually subject to outside noises.

It is impossible, of course, to meet in an "ideal" room every time, but judicious attention to environmental factors that can be altered can most often ensure that the meeting environment will be comfortable and conducive to good communication.

The Art of Leading the Meeting

Good meeting planning is essential for having consistently good meetings. Yet even with the best planning, meetings can go awry. The other half of the meeting leader's responsibility consists of successfully managing the "human energy" *during* the meeting.

The style of leadership the leader chooses is always an influencing factor. One may run meetings in the traditional fashion, like a captain running his ship, giving orders and taking full command. Another may prefer to view the leadership role as a subtle facilitator who is *at the service* of the group.

The concept of leadership has been changing rapidly in recent decades. It was once recommended that the leader be the master and controller of the group. Now it is more common for the meeting leader to be a manager and facilitator whose primary function is to foster a democratic and cooperative group process among participants. In keeping with the spirit of the times, the suggestions in this section are designed more for the "leader as facilitator" and less for the "leader as captain."

The What and How of Meeting Management

Trained meeting observers and perceptive meeting participants are aware of three distinct sets of activities that take place in every working session. The first set, called the "task" or "content" activities of the group, has to do with *what* the group is doing. The second set, called "maintenance" or "process" activities, has to do with *how* the group is doing it. The third set, called "team building" activities, involves ways the group is *improving* its efficiency and *expanding* its abilities. The effective group leader should be aware of and facilitate both activities.

Task activities, says Richard Dunsing, are "rational, systematic, cognitive efforts of the kind we typically expend in talking about and working on a problem." Task activities involve the stated goals of the meeting: to make a decision, to solve a problem, to plan a budget, to exchange information. Examples of task activities are setting goals, listing priorities, using background and history, examining consequences, linking with other issues, setting assignments, and agreeing on time limits.

Maintenance activities, states Nicholas DeLuca, "focus on keeping the group in functioning order by attending to process and group interactions." Such activities involve the personal, usually unstated goals of each member: to feel acceptance and affiliation, to achieve, to have power. Maintenance activities can be evaluated by watching the eruption of conflict and how it is handled, the participants' body language, the relevance of inputs from each participant, the expression of emotion by participants (such as anger, irritation, resentment, apathy, boredom, warmth, appreciation, or satisfaction), and the mixture of seriousness and playfulness in the group.

When emotions start surfacing, it is time for the group leader and other sensitive meeting participants to start "maintaining" the human relations in the group. Once the "meeting machine" is operating smoothly again, the meeting leader can guide the group back into task activities.

Team-building activities, continues DeLuca, "are designed to strengthen the group's capacity to act in the future." Considered collectively, team-building activities involve motivation functions, training functions, and celebration functions that serve to enhance the cohesiveness of the group as well as expand individual abilities and effectiveness. In this sense, it is no longer only the leader's knowledge and dedication to the meeting that will lead to its success, but the expertise and devotion of each participant.

Task Functions

The agenda is the primary tool the group leader has to help a group toward its goals. It defines the topics and objectives of the meeting and structures the time within the meeting. The agenda lists the work items of the meeting, the roadmap to its goals.

Topic number 1 on any agenda should be the approval of the agenda itself. This activity allows participants to review the "meeting menu" and suggest any changes they feel are necessary. For example, some members might feel that a topic should be given a larger time allotment in light of recent events, or that a certain topic should be talked about first thing. Even if no changes are made, the agenda review and approval are valuable for setting the stage for the meeting and allowing members to consider the topics collectively, before individually.

"Summation holds the greatest potential for streamlining the myriad of limited agenda meetings occurring every day," say the Palmers. Whenever possible, the meeting leader's introduction to each topic should include a brief summation of its purpose and issues, aspects agreed upon in earlier discussions, and points of disagreement. The information can "set the stage" for immediate discussion and action.

During the course of the meeting, the leader is responsible for monitoring the discussion in relation to its plan, the agenda. If the conversation gets off track, the leader should correct the direction of discussion. Questions can be a useful way to redirect the course of a meeting. For example, the leader may ask, "Just a moment, please. How does this relate to the point Janet made earlier?" A more direct approach, however, is sometimes needed: "This is interesting, but we're getting off the subject. Let's get back to the main topic."

The repetition of ideas or a general loss of interest should indicate to the leader that a subject has been discussed enough and that it is time to move on to the next topic. It is also important, however, that the leader be flexible and not hurry the meeting along too fast in the interest of sticking to the agenda. Says Maude: "Meetings need time to deal with complex problems: under pressure, they settle for quick but unsound decisions." For simple and routine decisions, it is best to heed Jack Whitehead's advice and decide them quickly, allowing time for more important decisions. This is best accomplished when the group sets its own time allotments and sticks to them.

A good way to round off the discussion of a topic is to summarize the main points brought up. If the participants feel enough time has been devoted to the topic, the leader can gracefully move onto the next topic. This may be done by simply introducing the group member listed on the agenda as responsible for the topic, or the leader may give background information on the topic and then immediately solicit group members' ideas.

At times it may become obvious that a different approach is needed to solve a problem. The leader should stop the discussion, suggest a new strategy, and ask what the group thinks of the change. Such "restructurings" of the group process can save time and prevent unnecessary conflict.

Another problem in many meetings is that some members are more aggressive than others in their presentation of ideas. More timid members may have good ideas, but their ideas may only get half-stated or half-heard. It is up to the meeting leader to be the "best listener" to draw out ideas and help elaborate them for the group. When the focus of a discussion is a decision, the leader should step in when he or she senses there may be a consensus and ask if the group is in substantial agreement. If no consensus is in sight and the discussion is not progressing, the leader can call for a vote. If consensus is necessary, however, the leader may have to think of a new method for resolving the remaining conflicts.

When a decision is made, the meeting leader should clarify what the decision is and how it will be implemented. Responsibilities should be assigned and deadlines for action set. This solid information should be entered at once into the minutes and recorded by participants in their copies of the agenda.

Even after a meeting that involved substantial disagreement, the leader should attempt to end on a positive note. It is a good idea to save for last an agenda item that everyone can agree on.

In conclusion, the meeting leader should sum up the entire meeting and restate its decisions and the assignments of responsibility. Just before the meeting adjourns, it may be a good time to arrange the next meeting time with group members.

Maintenance Functions

Maintenance functions, says Dunsing, concern "the way people think, act, and feel while they're immersed in the task." The importance of these functions can equal that of task functions, according to Bradford, since "without attention to moods, feelings, and interpersonal relationships, a group chokes its lifeline of energy and motivation to complete the task."

Other authors address the task/maintenance issue in terms of a balance between effort and reward. According to Michael Burgoon and his coauthors, the amount of personal reward members receive influences both "the willingness of group members to participate and their satisfaction with group outcomes."

The meeting leader must choose maintenance functions, then, to create a group in which members feel involved, nonthreatened, and satisfied in their personal needs. As negative interpersonal conflicts fade out, a group can reach its maximum productivity. The natural tendencies of humans to cooperate and solve mutual problems will emerge.

Drawing out and encouraging the more timid members of a group is one maintenance function already mentioned. Not only does this increase the "idea pool" of the group, it prevents timid members from withdrawing from active participation. Withdrawn members can cause trouble for a meeting in two ways: first, they are "dead weight" on the group's shoulders, contributing little to the meeting's productivity; second, out of feelings of resentment, they may sabotage group decisions by "forgetting" to do things or by working actively against implementation of the decisions in which they "really had no say."

Group members who feel that they and their ideas are valuable to the group will work for the group instead of against it, because they have gotten something positive from the group: acceptance, identity, and a feeling of belonging. Thus, the group leader should encourage participation from all members and make sure that the "smaller voices" are not overwhelmed.

One way to "open space" for the timid or unheard member is to take action against domineering participants, especially those who are long-winded. The Palmers present four suggestions for dealing with the disruptive participant:

- Don't yield the floor to them again when they finally yield it to another person.
- Direct the conversation to another: "John, I know this is a concern of yours as well; what do you think?"
- Summarize for them: "Let me see if I understand what you're saying before we go any further."
- Take the direct approach: "Jane, we don't have a lot of time... " or "I don't mean to interrupt, but we still have to deal with..."

It is also the leader's role to be a harmonizer when conflict breaks out in a meeting, as it inevitably will. "Harmonizing," says Bradford, "is negotiation between opposing sides in which one member serves as a third-party peacemaker, trying to retrieve the best ideas of both sides."

A certain degree of conflict, however, is part of a healthy group process. "When overdone," Bradford also warns, "harmonizing dulls the flash of creativity that confrontation can produce." But when conflict is extreme and egos are involved, the process can come to a complete standstill.

To decrease personal conflicts, it is important to distinguish clearly between ideas and individuals. Ideas, *not* individuals, should be evaluated by the group, stresses Bradford. "An individual may feel that a critical evaluation of his contribution is a rejection of himself. Such individuals, unable to separate their ideas from themselves, may withdraw. Others may fight, creating polarization and conflict in the group."

It is no easy trick getting participants to keep their minds on ideas instead of individuals, but reminders from the leader at critical times can help. A useful way to emphasize the distinction is this: Have each member write down his or her ideas for the solution of the problem. Collect the ideas and emphasize that they have become "group property." Then have the group evaluate the ideas one by one.

If possible, the leader should not take sides in an argument. When questioned about his or her opinion, the leader should relay the question back to the group: "That is a tough problem. Does anyone here have any ideas?"

Bormann and his associates warn that a leader who answers questions about substantive measures "is likely to be drawn in to conflict. Once part of the fight, he loses control of the meeting. It is difficult to lead and take an active part. The [leader] who does both may monopolize the meeting."

Indeed, monopolizing the meeting is usually what a traditional-style leader does when conflict is brewing. Yet one cannot both lead a meeting in which a personal stake is held and facilitate the meeting, as if neutral. One solution, discussed in the next section, is to train several or all members in facilitating meetings. Then when conflict erupts, the person neutral on the issue can "referee." Another approach, discussed later in this chapter, is to have a neutral person from outside the group facilitate the entire meeting (see The Interaction Method).

Team-Building Functions

Only recently have administrators realized the lasting value of improving the efficiency and attitudes of the meeting group as a whole. Team-building activities are a combination of task and maintenance activities, because they provide work items on the agenda that focus on the needs and abilities of group members. The object is to continually refine and add to meeting members' skills while increasing their motivation and cohesiveness as a group.

Team-building activities on an agenda may include specific training activities that can add to participants' communication skills as well as their ability to work as a team. As all the group members learn to facilitate the meeting, decisions can be made faster.

Motivation and celebration activities can be equally important ways to build team cohesiveness and interaction. Motivation activities, says DeLuca, "reinforce group membership and participation in the organization." Perhaps the best way to provide motivation for group members is to recognize organizational and individual achievements. If an individual creates a successful new disciplinary plan, that person should be singled out in a meeting and applauded. If a group of teachers devise a new materials distribution plan more efficient than the old one, a significant part of the group's next meeting should be spent celebrating that achievement. Whether it be food and drink in the meeting room or a gathering at a restaurant after the meeting, participants should be allowed to step away from issues and ideas for a while and enjoy their accomplishments.

You as a Participant

A meeting's success is not, of course, solely dependent on the leader's capabilities. Participants are also responsible for making meetings work.

The first rule for meeting participants is to come prepared. Read the agenda, think about the topics to be discussed, and make sure you understand the issues. Review the background information provided with the agenda, formulate your own views and opinions, and imagine what other points of view might be presented.

When you have a presentation to make at a meeting, prepare yourself fully: make an outline, prepare any visual aids you need, and rehearse your presentation. If your proposals are controversial, discuss them with key people before the meeting.

Once the meeting begins, use good manners: try not to shuffle papers or engage in side conversations. Participants are obligated to attend each meeting with a good "discussion attitude," say the Palmers, which "means being open minded, willing to consider compromise, accepting of disagreement and criticism, objective and realistic about your own contributions, and respectful of the contributions of others." Speak up when you have knowledge or ideas to share, but don't overparticipate—remember that you are part of an active group process. Ask clarifying questions when there appears to be confusion.

Help the leader by sticking to agenda topics and time limits, drawing out the ideas of others, facilitating the resolution of conflicts, and criticizing ideas instead of people. And . . . please arrive on time.

Utilizing Minutes

Minutes were invented to prevent conflict as much as to provide records. Memory, unfortunately, can be as fleeting as time itself. How much do you remember, for example, about your day just one week ago? The main problem is that even when we do think we recall something, we are often incorrect in our recollections.

Auger emphasizes this point by summarizing the results of a memory-retention study, conducted on the attendees of a psychological society meeting. Two weeks after the meeting, the average attendee could recall "only 8.4 per cent of all the points actually covered in the meeting." Worse yet, "forty-two per cent of what they thought they remembered was incorrectly recalled."

Thus, an important principle for making meetings more effective is to *document the results* of the meeting. Promptly writing the decisions made and actions required onto paper will help ensure that they are both remembered and implemented properly.

Minutes may consist of only a few simple statements outlining the major decisions of a meeting, but at the very least they should contain a certain minimal amount of information: What action is required, and how will it take place? Who is responsible for taking action? When should these actions be completed? It is also advisable to note motions that were not passed. The only way to avoid the common aftermeeting syndromes of forgetfulness, procrastination, and confusion is the proper documentation of details.

The information can be recorded by a group member or the group leader. Once a decision is reached, the minute taker should record the decision and all its details and immediately read it back to the group for confirmation. If meeting participants are using agenda copies similar to those recommended by Willard Fox earlier in this chapter, then they can create their own records of the proceedings.

Because meeting topics change from meeting to meeting, it is not advisable to have the same group member take notes at every meeting. "Choose someone who is unlikely to become involved in the meeting's controversies," suggests Oswald Ratteray. If an experienced and articulate writer is not available within the group, or absolute impartiality is required, it may be best to hire a formal minute taker.

One way to streamline this process is to use a tape recorder and extract the necessary information after the meeting. "If your meeting is dynamic," states Ratteray, "they will soon forget the equipment. When they know *why* it's there, they'll talk 'for the record' as much as to each other." Part of the stated policy of using a tape recorder should be to erase tapes as soon as the information is transcribed.

In addition to being time consuming, another disadvantage of taking minutes on the traditional notepad, says Richard Dunsing, is that "the course of events is hidden from view on the note paper. Others at the table cannot refer to past key points." An increasingly popular method is to record the proceedings of a meeting on large pieces of paper taped to the wall, or on large pads on an easel.

With this form of minutes, participants can see the past flow of ideas in the meeting and won't feel the necessity of repeating their ideas as much because others in the group have forgotten them. Another advantage of this method, says Don Halverson, is that "it serves to depersonalize the ideas—they become 'the group's'."

After the meeting, Ratteray recommends that the notes or recording of the meeting should become the basis of an executive summary "that systematically helps sort the wheat from the chaff." Under each topic or subject, a concise digest of what was discussed should be presented, perhaps focusing only on new information gained in the meeting and significant feedback. The summary should then be distributed to participants or even published in the faculty newsletter.

The rewards of this additional attention to summarizing meetings will most likely appear in future meetings. A concise record of previous discussions can help participants prepare for the next meeting. Ratteray suggests, further, that the meeting summaries be indexed under topic headings. Such archives can be used to resolve future problems and conflicts.

The Interaction Method

Another way to solve the leader/facilitator conflict mentioned earlier is to have a person from outside the group do the facilitating. In this arrangement, the leader is free to concentrate on the "what" of the meeting (the task functions), while the facilitator takes care of the "how" of the meeting (the maintenance functions). This is the approach proposed by Michael Doyle and David Straus in *How to Make Meetings Work*.

Their "Interaction Method" actually involves four separate roles that "collectively form a self-correcting system of checks and balances." The *facilitator* is "a neutral servant of the group and does not evaluate or contribute ideas." The facilitator suggests methods and procedures for the meeting, protects members of the group from personal attack, and makes sure everyone has an opportunity to speak. In short, "the facilitator serves as a combination of tool guide, traffic officer, and meeting chauffeur."

The *recorder*, or minute taker, is also neutral and nonevaluating. The recorder writes the group's ideas on large sheets of paper on the walls, using, whenever possible, the actual words of each speaker. The advantages of this approach, according to the authors, are that "the act of recording does not significantly slow down the process of the meeting," and the written record (called the "group memory") serves as "an accepted record of what is happening as it is happening."

The *group member* is the role played by the active participants in the meeting. The group members "keep the facilitator and recorder in their neutral roles" and make sure ideas are recorded accurately. Group members can also "make procedural suggestions" and "overrule the suggestions of the facilitators." Other than these functions, their main focus is the agenda and the tasks to be accomplished.

The fourth and final role is that of the *manager/chairperson*, who is an active participant in the group yet retains the powers and responsibilities of the traditional leadership position. The manager "makes all final decisions," controls the progress of the meeting, sets the agenda, "argues actively for his or her points of view," and "urges group members to accept tasks and deadlines."

It is interesting to note that even though the interaction method was built around an autocratic leadership style, it is now a prescribed technique in the area of participative decision-making, especially quality circles. The alterations needed to adjust the method to a more democratic style, or even a leaderless group, are very simple. The most important changes, according to Frank Satterwhite, involve the "manager/chairperson, who continues to define the limits of the group's authority" but "does not usurp the roles of the facilitator or the recorder."

Many organizations have implemented the interaction method and report widespread success. Doyle and Straus's book contains a complete description of the method as well as a wealth of techniques for improving meetings.

Tools for Evaluating and Improving Meetings

According to a recent survey by Richard Gorton and James Burns, teachers still feel that the minimal requirements of meeting planning, group interaction, and follow-through are not fulfilled. A majority of teachers from eleven school systems who answered questionnaires expressed disappointment with the way meetings were conducted in their schools. The main areas of discontent included the unavailability of background information, irregular planning procedures, control of meetings by a minority of members while others are silent, and unavailable or poorly summarized minutes.

Gorton and Burns concluded that "if teachers are not adequately involved during the meetings in productive problem solving and consensus seeking, they are likely to view their meetings as boring, unimportant, and administrator dominated."

When discontent among meeting members arises in a school, it is the group leader's responsibility to isolate the main problems and attempt to solve them. Literature on group dynamics and organizational development is replete with exercises, techniques, and "structured experiences" for evaluating and improving meetings. Some can be implemented quite easily and do not require special training, whereas others take a fair amount of preparation and followup and work best with a meeting consultant.

As an example of the former, Ernest and Nancy Bormann provide three checklists for meeting improvement. The first is a planning checklist that asks critical questions of the meeting planner, such as "What is the purpose of the meeting?"; "Who will participate?"; and "Will the room be ready and open?" The second checklist is designed for evaluating a meeting by a participant or an observer. Questions include, "Was the preparation for the meeting adequate?"; "Was a permissive social climate established?"; and "Did the leader exercise the right amount of control?" The final checklist is designed for the leader to evaluate how well he or she led the meeting: "Did you 'loosen up' the group before plunging into discussion?"; "Did you pose a challenging question to start the discussion?"

Perhaps the best way to keep meeting planning and organization in step with the needs of the school is to have meeting participants evaluate the meeting process at least twice a year. Leland Bradford provides six brief evaluation forms that members can complete at meeting's end. The leader and group can use the resulting data in several ways: a summary of the results can be announced at the next meeting; the leader can select themes from the forms and ask for discussion on those topics only; or the group can devote a whole meeting to the maintenance issues that surfaced via the evaluation forms.

Don Halverson describes several simple techniques for improving meetings. In "Going Around the Room," each participant in turn is asked to state his or her position at that moment. This method is useful "when the group is hung up around the views of those who are dominating the conversation," says Halverson, as well as "when the group seems to have run out of solutions." It is also useful for quickly evaluating a meeting and for winding up a meeting.

In "Subgrouping," the group is temporarily divided into smaller groups of two to six people to discuss either the same or different topics. In larger groups, subgrouping can keep members involved, allow every participant to be heard, and permit more than one topic to be discussed at once. (A legislature with its committee system is the epitome of subgrouping.) Jack Fordyce and

Raymond Weil report the success of subgrouping in a meeting that included both professional and clerical workers: "To surface underlying issues for the agenda, the group was divided into homogeneous subgroups. Each subgroup reported its proposed agenda items. For the first time, the voices of the clerical staff were heard."

Publications containing additional evaluation tools and suggestions for improving meetings are *Meetings: Accomplishing More with Better & Fewer* by Robert Maidment and William Bullock, *Democratic Leadership by Managing Meetings for Effective Group Decision-Making* by Mary Stephens and Robert Forest, *Taking Your Meetings Out of the Doldrums* by Eva Schindler-Rainman and her colleagues, and *Handbook of Organizational Development in Schools* by Richard Schmuck and Philip Runkel.

Conclusion

As educators are burdened with an ever-increasing number of duties and responsibilities, effective meeting techniques become more and more important. Education cannot afford the price of unproductive and unsatisfying meetings. Each meeting must become more effective at grappling with the future, more effective as an arena of controlled change. At the same time, meetings must serve to satisfy personal needs for affiliation, achievement, activity, and power, for the long-term benefit of both the organization and society.

In summation, this chapter has outlined the process of successful meeting management as follows:

At the beginning of the process, the leader's first guides are the goals and purposes he or she wishes to accomplish in the meeting. The leader must then decide what type of leadership style is best suited to his or her own nature, the structure and goals of the school, and the needs and desires of group members. Next, the meeting planner draws up the blueprints for the meeting's action—the agenda. The framework of the meeting takes form as the participants are invited, the seating arrangements are determined, the meeting room is arranged, and background information and agendas are distributed to participants.

As the meeting opens, the interpersonal and discussion skills of the chairperson come to the fore. Using the agenda as a road map, the leader can guide the group through the chaos of problem-solving and decision-making. At the same time, the leader is alert for the surfacing of negative emotions and maintains the human relations in the group as needed. As decisions are made, the leader makes sure that responsibilities are clearly designated and that deadlines for action are set. After the meeting, the leader distributes the minutes or executive summary, follows up on the decisions made, and evaluates the effectiveness of the meeting.

When meetings are run in this way, they can be both productive and satisfying! When careful thought is given to purpose, planning, and the personal needs of participants, your meetings, too, can become more effective.

Chapter 14

Managing Time and Stress

Sandra Huffstutter and Stuart C. Smith

Office graffiti. You find it in virtually every workplace and the subject is virtually always the same: stress arising from work and the lack of time to do work right. Coffee mugs, plastic plaques, and tacky statuary communicate the wit and wisdom of these occupational plagues.

> "As soon as the rush is over I'm going to have a nervous breakdown."
>
> "My cup runneth amuck."
>
> "Why is there never enough time to do the job right, but always enough time to do it over?"
>
> "Worker's Dilemma:
>
> 1. No matter how much you do, you'll never do enough.
> 2. What you don't do is always more important than what you do do."

Folk wisdom aside, it is no secret that the management of time and stress in the workplace has become a major concern to employee and employer alike. It has been estimated that stress-related dysfunctions each year cause several billion dollars of losses in industrial productivity. Also, occupational stress reduces the worker's capacity for intelligently managing his or her time.

This true "Worker's Dilemma" has definitely not bypassed the schools. Everyone seems to be aware of the problems, but few seem to do anything constructive (aside from the therapeutic posting of graffiti) about them. Why is this the case? Let's take a look at two kinds of mental sets: those that block and those that boost the effective management of time and stress.

Blocks to Time/Stress Management

One reason for resistance to a change in work habits is rooted in our national character. The Protestant Work Ethic dictates that we labor ceaselessly—or, at least, appear to do so. Any change in work habits that would provide worker "down-time" would therefore be morally suspect, to say the least.

Another set of values that conflicts with effective office management includes those oriented against any form of regimentation. "Go with the flow" and "hang loose" attitudes accentuate the value of spontaneity at the expense of productivity and the mental ease provided by stable routine.

A major block to the effective management of time and stress is the employee's actual cherishing of time/stress pressures. In many organizations, excessive busyness is a sign of status—the mark of being indispensable—and stress is the "designer label" of that status. Excessive busyness is also cherished as a respectable form of procrastination—of avoiding important tasks due to preoccupation with innumerable trivial tasks. Thus Alan Lakein, a popular advocate of time management, describes the "Overdoer" as someone who is "so busy doing things that he has no time to assess their true value."

The laughable excesses of some time management advocates also constitute a block to serious consideration of their programs. Suggestions for solving problems while you sleep, practicing isometrics whenever placed "on hold," and listening to language tapes while commuting all seem excessive. Such time management zealots probably need to be reminded of Bunuel's Law (quoted from Block): "Overdoing things is harmful in all cases, even when it comes to efficiency."

A final and more serious impediment to time/stress management is the "It won't work here" attitude. It's human nature to feel that one's own business, staff, service, whatever, is unique and not reducible to generalized precepts. This attitude is particularly tempting in a "people business" like education. There is no evidence, however, that time problems vary among different kinds of organizations.

In his highly readable monograph on time management for the school administrator, Gilbert Weldy asserts that difficulties in the management of time cut through distinctions between education and industry. Principals, he says, face the same kinds of problems with effective time management and to the same degree as do business managers. He cites a study of high school principals in which 86 percent of the respondents indicated that "lack of time" was their greatest obstacle to adequate job performance.

The primary challenge, then, is this: To *unblock* the route to effective time/stress management by recognizing unproductive values and attitudes (like those just described) and then to make a commitment to replace any unproductive values with productive ones. Time and stress management is primarily a challenge to your values and attitudes and only secondarily a challenge to your skills.

Boosts to Time/Stress Management

Management consultants are given to speaking in aphorisms. Peter Drucker, whose management expertise has made him the patron saint of both MBA students and executives of multinational corporations, says, "Time is the scarcest resource, and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed." Alan Lakein opens his best-selling *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life* with the words: "Time is life. It is irreversible and irreplaceable. To waste your time is to waste your life, but to master your time is to master your life and make the most of it."

These eminently quotable consultants developed their aphoristic style out of a need to motivate—to motivate their clients to value those character traits, attitudes, and concepts that facilitate effective management. These facilitators can be grouped into two broad categories: "self-control" and "job-control." Let's take a brief look at each before turning to practical skills and strategies for improved management of time and stress.

Self-Control

Fundamental to self-control is self-knowledge. What are your strengths, your weaknesses, your skills? What is your personality type, your physiological type? Are you a detail person or a "big picture" person? Are you a reader or a listener? A participant or an observer? A morning person or an evening person? What forces shaped your past? What do you project to be the shape of your future?

As Hamlet has taught us, knowledge of self is unproductive unless coupled with discipline in action and behavior. Alan Lakein devotes whole chapters to the subjects of self-discipline and willpower and how to bolster both. Like the ancient Greeks' ideal of the "Golden Mean" and the Bible's exhortation that "to everything there is a season," Lakein's book espouses balance and control: a time for work and a time for relaxation, a time for working together and a time for working alone.

Another sort of balance and control is discussed by management consultant and writer W. A. Mambert. Linking time management directly to self-knowledge and maturity, Mambert issues a caveat against "excess emotional and mental baggage," including "compulsive talking, over-defensiveness, over-explaining, self-justification, fear, guilt, worry, gossip, office politics, over-sensitivity, and similar subjective activities related to being a basically immature person."

Self-knowledge plus self-discipline equals maturity, and maturity boosts one's potential for effective management of time and stress.

Job-Control

Like self-control, job-control requires knowledge—knowledge of the primary purpose of your organization and of your own specific role therein. In *Executive Time Management*, Helen Reynolds and Mary Tramel assert that the employee's raison d'etre is to further the organization's "primary purpose" (for instance, to give all students access to a quality education), not merely to perform the functions listed in the employee's job description. The authors warn against confusing your "functions" (developing curriculum, attending school board meetings, supervising teachers, disciplining students, and so forth) with your primary purpose, since your value as an executive is measured in degrees of effectiveness. It is not so much how efficiently you perform your function as it is how effectively you move toward the attainment of the organization's primary goal.

With your overall purpose firmly in mind, you will find it easier to clarify your role and its functions, objectives, and areas of responsibility. Such a clarification requires precise communication between yourself, your staff, and your superiors, but will pay off in reduced stress and reduced time misuse caused by excessive, ambiguous, or conflicting responsibilities. Role clarification as a technique for time and stress management will be discussed in greater detail later. Here the emphasis is on its importance as a *facilitator* for the initiation of time/stress management strategies within your office.

Now, keeping in mind the importance of commitment and control, let's turn to practical procedures for improved management of time and stress.

Time Management Strategies

If time management was a mystery twenty years ago, it certainly is not today—as a quick check of your library's journal indexes and card catalogue will confirm. The variety of titles are strikingly unvaried in content, so much so that one can speak of a "classical" approach to time management—a four-part, rather circular process that includes the following:

1. goal-setting, which leads to prioritizing
2. keeping a daily time log, which leads to the identification of time-wasters
3. management of time-wasters, which leads to increased discretionary time
4. wise use of discretionary time, which leads to the accomplishment of those goals identified in step one

Goal-Setting and Prioritizing

Just as the smart shopper does not shop without a grocery list, and the smart teacher does not teach without a course outline, so the smart administrator needs a written list or outline of professional goals to administer effectively. The operative word here is *effectively*. When Reynolds and Tramel asserted that "your value as an executive is measured in degrees of effectiveness," they were reiterating a key distinction made by Peter Drucker: the distinction between effectiveness and efficiency. Drucker insists that "the executive's job is to be effective," not efficient—which means getting "the right things done," rather than merely doing things right. And those "right things" relate directly to advancing the organization's primary purpose, as discussed earlier.

For principals and assistant principals, one of the most important "right things" is instructional leadership. Yet this activity is often displaced by other tasks not as central to the principal's job. When Larry Hughes surveyed fifty-one instructional supervisors in medium to very large Texas school systems, they reported, on average, that ideally they would like to allocate 30 percent of their time to classroom observation and work with individual teachers. But only 10 percent of their actual time was spent on this activity. What prevented the ideal from becoming actual? Heading the list of time constraints were telephone interruptions, preparing "useless" reports and other paperwork, excessive meetings, and spontaneous interruptions.

Besides needing to learn to better manage these time wasters (subject of a later section), these instructional supervisors need to reexamine their goals and priorities. "It is possible," Hughes says, "that the supervisor's and organization's expectations may not be the same." Such conflicting expectations happen all too frequently, he explains, "even when there are well written job descriptions." If you experience conflict between your own and others' expectations, Hughes recommends that you seek clarification of your job. This you can do by listing both major tasks and all those other tasks that are less central (and may in fact prevent accomplishment of the central tasks) but that seemingly must also be attended to. The next step is to discuss these lists with your superordinate and colleagues and reach agreement about them.

By following this job clarification process, you will be able to make sure your goals conform to your organization's goals. This being the case, your organization presumably will approve of clearing your job description of all tasks keeping you from accomplishment of agreed-upon high priority goals.

Your goals list can take any number of forms. Lakein recommends identification of lifetime goals, three-year goals, and six-month goals. Regardless of the form in which you put your goals statements, the important thing is that you put them in writing. List them, chart them, diagram them, or index-card them, but above all, *write them*! Write them because, as any four-year-old knows who has just penciled her own name for the first time: writing makes it real.

After listing your goals, the next step is to prioritize them. Not all goals or values are equally important, nor are they of the same importance at all times. Prioritize based on your point of view of right now. You can (and should) update your goals and priorities when your point of view changes—as it inevitably will.

Once you've prioritized, you're ready to select your two or three most important goals and to list specific, short-term activities that will further those goals. For example, if one of your goals is to initiate a program of gifted education in your school, your activities list might include checking with the school district to see what state and local funds are available; forming a committee of parents, teachers, and administrators to investigate various kinds of existing gifted programs; and so forth.

Finally, after listing activities for your three most important goals, prioritize again. This should result in your "A-1" goal and your "A-1" activity to further that goal, as Lakein would say. This activity constitutes your foremost "right thing": your most valuable, potential contribution to your school district, your primary leadership responsibility.

Now the overriding question becomes: How are you going to find the time—in an already overburdened workday—to pursue this priority activity? The answer is simple: You identify time-wasters with the use of a daily time log and learn to manage those that are within your control.

The Daily Time Log

When Peter Drucker listed five characteristic practices that distinguished the effective executive, the one that topped his list was the fact that "effective executives know where their time goes." To know for certain where your time goes, most management consultants recommend that you keep some kind of *written* daily log for at least a week. If you find it difficult to fill in a time log, try this alternative suggested by Larry Stevens: "Design a grid with your normal duties listed along the top and 10- or 20-minute intervals down the side." As you go through the day, you only need to place checks in the appropriate squares.

To gain maximum benefit from a time log, you must use it again and again at least four times a year. This habitual use, points out Ruth Rees, enables you to profit from the "Hawthorne effect"—"the process of self-awareness, self-monitoring, and hence self-development for a more effective management of time."

The kind of log you use is less important than that you (or your secretary or assistant) track your time. You can track fifteen-minute segments, one-hour segments, or simply note the time whenever you change activities. You can track each distinct activity or only the main activity in the specified time block, or you can track only certain kinds of activities that concern you for some reason or another (telephone calls, drop-in visitors, scheduled meetings, whatever).

When you track your activities—perhaps at the end of each day—try to evaluate each activity on the basis of its significance. Michael Sexton and Karen Switzer recommend the following rating system:

#1= Professional Goal Functions (long-range planning and leadership activities; curriculum planning, for example)

#2= Critical/Crisis Functions (immediate, situational concerns; a student-teacher conflict, for example)

#3= Maintenance Functions (routine administrative tasks; fire drills, for example)

P= Personal Activities (calling home, going to the dentist)

While your primary responsibility as a leader is to engage in #1s, your time log will probably reveal that your workday is consumed entirely by #2s and #3s. Patrick Duignan found that the school superintendent is precluded from long-range planning and other leadership functions by virtue of the incredibly interruptive and discontinuous nature of his or her workday. Duignan observes that, within the superintendent's typical 8.2 hour, work-through-lunch workday, he or she engages in about thirty-eight disparate activities, nearly 40 percent of which "lasted less than five minutes each."

Moreover, Duignan found that fully 25 percent of the superintendent's day is spent in unscheduled meetings (drop-in visitors are included here), and nearly 25 percent more is spent in scheduled meetings. Rather than acting as a decision-maker, then, the superintendent acts as a contact-person, an "information broker," who spends three-quarters of the day in verbal contacts for the purpose of receiving or dispensing information.

Does this sound familiar? Does your time log coincide with Duignan's observations? If so, then, like so many other leaders, you are working in the "reactive" mode, rather than in a self-directed "active" mode. Your response time (time spent responding to people, mail, and situations) far outweighs your discretionary time (time spent on A-1 activities). To put your workday into a more productive balance, you now need to recognize and manage time-wasters. Or, as Sexton and Switzer advise, you need to learn how to do the #2s and #3s *efficiently*, so that you will have time to do the #1s *effectively*.

Managing Time Wasters

The time-waster is a two-headed dragon. External time-wasters wear the face of "the other": visitors, telephone calls, meetings, paperwork, coworkers' needs. Internal time-wasters wear the face of the self: inability to say "no," inability to schedule and prioritize, inability to delegate, tendency to procrastinate. Let's look at these one at a time, with an eye toward specific, dragon-slaying strategies.

Visitors and Telephone Calls

Telephone and visitor interruptions are two of the three worst daily time-wasters (meetings being the third). Because they act as interrupters, they destroy concentration and momentum—the twins of productivity. Management of these time-wasters is, as always, first a matter of attitude and only then a matter of skill. Administrators must recognize that total accessibility (the "open-door" policy), while subjectively gratifying, is professionally counterproductive. It follows that administrators must value their own time before expecting others to do the same.

Most time management experts recommend reducing visitor and telephone interruptions through the use of "buffering" and "limiting" techniques. That is, they suggest you should buffer (insulate) yourself from excessive or unproductive personal contacts and consciously limit the time spent on each necessary or unavoidable contact.

Translated into office procedure, buffering is primarily accomplished by the secretary—who screens all calls and visitors—while limiting is accomplished by the development of some rather brusque habits, such as not offering coffee and tea to visitors, not offering your visitors a chair, not socializing excessively, and so forth.

However, these standard recommendations may be inappropriate in the educational setting. As educational managers, democratic and open communications with students, parents, colleagues, and staff probably constitute some of the highest and best uses of your time. Therefore, the conventional wisdom of business-oriented time management consultants requires some tempering here.

Perhaps the most productive strategy for harried educational administrators is the scheduling of regular blocks of time during which you are inaccessible to visitors and telephone calls. Because it is commonly accepted that one is unavailable when involved in a scheduled meeting, consider this block of time to be a "meeting with yourself"—as it certainly is.

During this time, have your calls intercepted by your secretary or your switchboard. Close the door to your office. Place bookshelves and files with often-needed information adjacent to your desk, so that such information is readily available. Strive to make yourself highly invisible during periods of inaccessibility, just as you strive to make yourself highly visible (in the staff lounge at lunch time, in the halls before school, in the meeting room before board meetings) during periods of accessibility.

Above all, train your staff and colleagues to respect this quiet time, because studies show that it will likely be the *only* productive work time available to you during the entire day.

When you select the portions of each day that you will be inaccessible, be sure to take into account what Ruth Rees calls "the ebb and flow of the organization." She cites the example of an elementary school principal who, because he considered himself a "morning person," reserved the first two hours of each day to work at his desk. Although he maintained an open-door policy the remainder of the day and for an hour in the early afternoon walked the halls and toured classrooms, the teachers perceived that he was inaccessible and deliberately avoiding them.

When the principal analyzed his schedule in light of the "institutional context," he realized the early morning period was one of the few times during the day when the teachers were free of students and could seek his counsel. Immediately he changed his schedule and told the staff he would be available each morning. And instantly, the school's climate improved. Observes Rees: "All that was required, as it turned out, was a synchronization of activities within the institution."

The next major external time-waster—meetings—is covered at length in chapter 13. The strategies discussed there for holding efficient, productive meetings will inevitably cut down on time wasted in inefficient, unproductive meetings. Note particularly the time-wise advice on scheduling, agendas, and limiting attendees.

Paperwork

After drop-ins, the telephone, and meetings, paperwork ranks as the next most frustrating external time-waster. According to R. Alec MacKenzie, a cluttered desk and the personal disorganization it reflects "rank among the top ten barriers" to effective time use. To those who rationalize the clutter—"I can find anything I really want, and that's what's important"—he replies, "True, you can find anything—in time." Executives can redeem this wasted time by following some simple rules of managing paperwork.

Donna and Merrill Douglass assert that "there are only three kinds of paper": action items, information items, and throw-away items. After your secretary screens, categorizes, and prioritizes your mail accordingly, try some of these methods for effectively dealing with action and information items:

Action items. ☐ One of Lakein's laws prescribes that you "handle each piece of paper only once." In support, the Douglasses estimate that "at least 80 percent of the mail could be answered immediately when read." Don't let those action items pile up. Handle them quickly, in order of priority, at a scheduled time of the day.

☐ Action items with a low priority may not need doing at all. Lakein suggests a procrastination drawer: dump low priority items into it and see if they're ever missed.

☐ Weldy suggests that you categorize your action items into separately labelled manila folders: "urgent," "dictate," "to do," "for Faculty Bulletin," and so forth. MacKenzie prefers color-coded folders: "red for urgent and important, blue for action today, green for reading," and so forth.

☐ Delegate paperwork to your secretary. Pencil a brief note of response in the margin of incoming correspondence, letting your secretary draft the formal response from that.

☐ Whenever possible, use time-saving paperwork expediters: routing slips, attachment slips, form letters, form paragraphs, handwritten responses, and the telephone.

☐ Learn to use a dictating machine. You will save not only your own time (since one can dictate at sixty words per minute as opposed to writing longhand at ten words per minute), but your secretary's time as well (since transcribing by dictaphone is faster than either taking shorthand or reading longhand).

☐ Limit the items on your desk. MacKenzie says to keep on your desk only "the project you are working on" and "your planner/organizer," consisting of a daily/weekly/monthly plan, a list of objectives and projects, and other personal management helps. MacKenzie warns against leaving on your desk a stack of papers reminding you of things you don't want to forget. The problem is, he points out, these reminders work too well: every time you look up they distract you from the task at hand.

☐ Initiate a "tickler" or "suspense" filing system. Manila folders or accordion files labelled one through thirty-one and January through December will permit you to keep tract of upcoming tasks, commitments, or annual responsibilities. For example, if annual budget estimates are due each May, "tickle" a reminder in April's file that it is time to begin gathering the appropriate data.

Use the daily tickler files in the same way.

Information Items ☐ Use a variety of filing systems: desk top files and ticklers, desk files that include most-often-needed items of information, and cabinet files that are systematically arranged in a way that is clear to both yourself and your closest staffpersons.

☐ Obtain and use a computer with a good database management program. You can store and instantly retrieve personnel, financial, student, and other management data. As Larry Stevens says, "The time spent in developing a working knowledge of the computer will be returned many times over."

☐ Recognize this: Some studies estimate that fully 95 percent of all papers filed are never retrieved again. The Douglasses recommend the following steps for determining whether an item is worth keeping:

1. Have your secretary keep a log, for several months, of items retrieved from files. These items will comprise your "useful filing" list.
2. Before filing an item, ask yourself: "Does this item fit in the 'useful filing' category?" "Could I retrieve this information from someone else's files, if needed?" "What use shall I make of this item within the next year?"

Schedule an annual spring cleaning of the files, with an eye toward tossing as much as possible.

☐ Learn to skim reading matter or train your secretary to skim, highlight, and digest. Redirect reading matter to your subordinates and colleagues.

☐ Keep journals, articles, and updates in one section of your shelves, ready for availability when heading out to dentist appointments or business trips.

Before moving from "external" to "internal" time-wasters, mention should be made of one time displacer that actually straddles the two categories. This time waster is what Oncken and Wass (as described by Carol Giesecke and others) have termed "monkeys": those demands inappropriately placed on the administrator by subordinates. Whereas the administrator generally *must* respond to demands made by superiors, and whereas he or she generally *chooses* to respond to demands made by peers, the administrator needs to perceive demands made by subordinates as an often inappropriate use of his or her time and an example of "passing the buck upwards."

For example, a recently hired administrative assistant inquires about the district's pension plan. Rather than accepting the "monkey" and rifling among the files for explanatory documents, the time-wise administrator should briefly refer the new employee to the personnel department. Learning to shrug off "monkeys" is akin to learning to say "no"—the first internal time-waster we will consider.

Internal time-wasters are both the easiest and the hardest to control, and for the same reason: their control lies exclusively within yourself. Your success at managing them is entirely up to you, but, as always, awareness and attitude will take you halfway there.

Inability to Say "No"

Let's begin with learning to say "no." In Pamela Stanfield's words: "Don't shoot skinny rabbits." They "are not worth the effort it takes to shoot, skin, and clean them." Instead, wait for a fat rabbit.

Lakein advises that "you must set priorities based on the importance to you of the person doing the asking and the consequences if you don't do what's being asked." If you subsequently decide that the task is not a priority item, you simply and courteously refuse, with perhaps a brief explanation of your time constraints.

Peter Drucker suggests that you review your daily time log with a view toward asking yourself, "What would happen if this were not done at all?" He goes on to say that "all one has to do is to learn to say 'no' if an activity contributes nothing to one's own organization, to oneself, or to the organization for which it is to be performed." He concludes by asserting that you can thus dispose of one quarter of your time demands with no significant effect.

Similarly, W. A. Mambert recommends the "Wash Decision"—a decision not to proceed with a project when complications begin to outweigh the value of the final result. The fundamental principle implied in all these recommendations is that of the "primary purpose." With your chief contribution to the school district's primary purpose firmly in mind, deciding whether to say "yes" or "no" to any activity should be simplified.

Inability to Schedule

Consciousness of your primary purpose will also help to eliminate another internal time waster: the inability to schedule. Scheduling is actually a multifaceted gem that includes planning, prioritizing, clustering, and delegating. All are essential to managing time effectively.

You began to plan when you accomplished your prioritized list of goal statements and activities. Now you need to narrow your focus, to make the best use of the days that will carry you toward your goals.

Daily planning can be done first thing in the morning or last thing in the evening—whenever you have fifteen minutes of quiet time. Make a "to do" list that includes the day's chief tasks, including some steps toward accomplishment of your A-1 activity. Then systematically prioritize those tasks (using Sexton and Switzer's #1, #2, #3 system or Lakein's A, B, C system).

Prioritizing is greatly aided by knowledge of the 80/20 rule, Lakein's definition of which seems to be the most explicit:

> The 80/20 rule suggests that in a list of ten items, doing two of them will yield most (80 percent) of the value. Find these two, label them A, get them done. Leave most of the other eight undone, because the value you'll get from them will be significantly less than that of the two highest-value items. . . . It's important to remind yourself again and again not to get bogged down on low-value activities but to focus on the 20 percent where the high value is.

Next, coordinate your "to dos" with your scheduled appointments, remembering to schedule a block of quiet time for work on your A-1. While most management consultants recommend blocking out one or two hours for this leadership activity, Weldy estimates that the educational administrator can probably wrest only half an hour of such time from daily demands. Above all, schedule this time realistically. A glance at your daily time log should reveal peaks and lulls in external activities and in your own internal energy level. Common sense dictates, then, that you schedule your leadership time as close as possible to the intersection of peak energy and low activity levels.

After scheduling, attack your "to dos" in order of priority. Do the important tasks first, delegate whatever you can, and don't fret if the #3s have to wait for another day. It is not important to do everything—just the important things. Cluster similar activities (for example, all call-backs, all paperwork) whenever possible and steel yourself to finish each task before going on to the next, because clustering and completion eliminate wasteful transition time.

Inability to Delegate

For a variety of reasons, many of which are purely and emotionally subjective, most administrators find it difficult to delegate. Again, an attitudinal change must precede the learning of new skills. People tend to perceive delegation as a thrusting of one's "dirty work" onto others. Instead, the leader should distinguish between work that advances one's contribution to the organization's primary purpose and work that does not.

Once that distinction is made, the leader should retain the former and delegate the latter, in addition to delegating routine tasks, tasks at which others are more skilled, tasks at which the leader is already skilled, and tasks that the leader actively dislikes.

A quick review of your daily time log should raise your consciousness in regard to delegating. Assess each activity in terms of whether it could have been delegated and then commit yourself to better manipulation of this time displacer.

As Larry Hughes and Gerald Ubben explain, executives can delegate varying degrees of responsibility to subordinates, depending on their abilities and the nature of the project. Listed below are Hughes and Ubben's "six degrees of delegation." The farther down this list one goes, the less involvement is required of the executive and the more autonomy is granted the staff member.

1. "Look into this and give me the particulars. I will decide."
2. "Give me your analysis and recommendation for my review."
3. "Decide and let me know your decision. But wait for my go-ahead."
4. "Decide and let me know your decision. Then take action unless I say not to" (within some specified time).
5. "Decide and take action, but let me know what you did."
6. "Decide and take action. You need not check back with me."

Helen Reynolds and Mary Tramel offer useful lists of practical tips for delegating. Suffice it to say here that effective delegation requires clear communication with the delegatee, assignment of authority and decision-making capability to the delegatee, a system for monitoring and followup, and a relaxed attitude toward the delegatee's work procedures (results are more important than the methods used to obtain them).

Gilbert Weldy says that it helps to perceive delegation as an investment in time that accrues long-term benefits. One of those benefits is invaluable on-the-job training for your staff, whose expertise reflects directly on you, their leader. Moreover, your ability to rise to a more challenging position hinges directly on the knowledgeability and effectiveness of those you have trained in your current position. Say Hughes and Ubben, "There is some wisdom in the only partly facetious statement: 'Whatever is worth doing is worth getting someone else to do'."

Procrastination

Finally, the last internal time waster that deserves mention here is a demon with whom we are all familiar: procrastination. Procrastination is professionally debilitating in that we tend to procrastinate precisely those difficult, challenging A-1 activities with which we should be most integrally involved. Low priority tasks, on the other hand, are quickly accomplished, provide instant gratification, and are therefore completed with much more regularity.

Alan Lakein's advice on this subject is both practical and persuasive. In eight key chapters, he suggests a variety of tactics, including the following: recognizing the consequences of delay and the advantages of action; reducing a large task to small subtasks; working at the task for five minutes per day to initiate involvement; gathering additional data; performing a subtask of the A-1 that coincides with your current mood; setting deadlines and announcing your deadline to someone else; taking rest breaks; and rewarding yourself as subtasks are accomplished.

Of the four-part process to time management, this completes part three: subduing the doubleheaded dragon of external and internal time wasters. At this point a warning must be sounded. Incorporating any of the preceding strategies into your office routine may require uncomfortable changes in comfortable habits. For this reason, and because he is convinced that "evolutionary changes of style are more profitable than revolutionary changes," Ray Cross recommends adopting time management strategies gradually, one at a time. In other words, instead of quickly slaying the two-headed dragon, you should actually try starving it to death. Once you have successfully internalized a new strategy and made that new strategy a comfortable habit, you can then add another, and another, to your repertoire.

And to what end? Darrell Lewis and Tor Dahl state, "It is generally accepted that most managers should be able to clear about 25 percent of their time with little or no drop in current output"—which leads us to part four. Thus cleared, that time becomes discretionary time, leadership time, time for planning and executing Drucker's "right things."

Weldy closes his monograph with a shopping list of suggested leadership activities that includes detailing a "great idea" for your school, making fresh contacts with students and parents, planning the next year's chief objectives, and writing an article. At this point we shift our attention to another leadership activity worthy of addition to Weldy's list. Having begun the management of time, why not research and implement a program for its corollary—the management of stress?

Stress Management

Previously it was noted that time and stress management are two strands of the same braid. Not only does mismanagement of the one exacerbate mismanagement of the other, but also specific problem areas in the management of both are identical. For instance, paperwork, telephone and visitor interruptions, excessive meetings, lack of planning time, and procrastination are both time wasters *and* stress producers.

The correlations between time and stress management suggest that the strategies for attacking both would also correlate. And so they do. Like time management, the management of stress requires the following: (1) a shift in attitudes and level of awareness, (2) self-analysis and identification of stressors via the daily stress log, and (3) practical techniques for the management of those stressors identified. As always, awareness and attitude come first.

What precisely is stress? Among the myriad of definitions in print, that advanced by Donald Dudley and Elton Welke is exceptional for its simplicity: *stress* is "an adaptive response in which your body prepares, or adjusts, to a threatening situation."

Such preparation manifests itself in a host of symptoms, both physiological (increase in heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, and levels of adrenalin) and psychological (irritability, depression, anxiety, withdrawal). Further, stress is integrally related to control: the greater one's sense of powerlessness over the stressor, the greater the stress.

Because one's perception of a "threatening situation" is often highly subjective (discounting obvious physical calamities), stress itself is a highly subjective phenomenon; it truly is "all in the mind." Consequently, intellectual awareness of and proper emotional attitudes toward stress are even more important than a similar enlightenment toward time, which is a highly objective phenomenon.

One instructive orientation into common stressors and their relative magnitudes is Holmes and Rahe's Social Readjustment Rating Scale. The scale (see table 1) lists forty-three different "life events," ranging from "Death of Spouse" to "Minor Violations of the Law" and assigns each event a numerical value (from a high of 100 to a low of 11) that correlates to the stressfulness of

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Table 1. Social Readjustment Rating Scale

Rank	Life Event	Mean Value
1	Death of a Spouse	100
2	Divorce	73
3	Marital Separation	65
4	Jail Term	63
5	Death of Close Family Member	63
6	Personal Injury or Illness	53
7	Marriage	50
8	Fired at Work	47
9	Marital Reconciliation	45
10	Retirement	45
11	Change in Health of Family Member	44
12	Pregnancy	40
13	Sex Difficulties	39
14	Gain of New Family Member	39
15	Business Readjustment	39
16	Change in Financial State	38
17	Death of Close Friend	37
18	Change to Different Line of Work	36
19	Change in Number of Arguments with Spouse	35
20	Mortgage over $10,000	31
21	Foreclosure of Mortgage or Loan	30
22	Change in Responsibilities at Work	29
23	Son or Daughter Leaving Home	29
24	Trouble with In-Laws	29
25	Outstanding Personal Achievement	28
26	Wife Begins or Stops Work	26
27	Begin or End School	26
28	Change in Living Conditions	25
29	Revision of Personal Habits	24
30	Trouble with Boss	23
31	Change in Work Hours or Conditions	20
32	Change in Residence	20
33	Change in Schools	20
34	Change in Recreation	19
35	Change in Church Activities	19
36	Change in Social Activities	18
37	Mortgage or Loan Less than $10,000	17
38	Change in Sleeping Habits	16
39	Change in Number of Family Get-Togethers	15
40	Change in Eating Habits	15
41	Vacation	13
42	Christmas	12
43	Minor Violations of the Law	11

Reprinted with permission from *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*,vol. II, T. H. Holmes, R. H. Rahe, 1967, p. 216, table III, Pergamon Press, Ltd.

the event. To use the scale, you merely note which "life events" occurred to you during the previous two years and tally the associated numerical values. The significance of the scale lies in the fact that studies have shown a positive correlation between degrees of stress and the probability of incipient illness or accidents, as Dudley and Welke explain:

> Should you accumulate 150 points on the Social Readjustment Rating Scale within a period of two years, there is a 33 percent probability for you to contract an illness or suffer an accident. When 300 points are accumulated, the probability soars to 66 percent. At 450 points the probability is almost certain—in the 90 percent range.

While a personal tally on the rating scale will certainly prove revealing, Walter Gmelch (1978) issues this caveat against an overly literal reading of the scale:

> A few points should be kept in mind: first, both pleasant (marriage) and unpleasant (divorce) life events can cause harmful stress; second, no one can escape, nor does anyone necessarily want to escape all these crises, since to some degree stress is life; and, third, due to differing abilities to cope, the same event does not have the same impact on all individuals.

The ability to cope is a learned set of skills and is central to the understanding and management of stress. How well do you cope? Dudley and Welke offer a coping quiz that asks questions ranging from "Do people who know you well think you get upset easily?" to "Have you set goals for the future that satisfy you and are realistic?" Your answers should prove as revealing as your tally on the Social Readjustment Rating Scale.

Another instructive exercise is the "Type 'A' Behaving" questionnaire included in Michael and Delores Giammatteo's book. A high proportion of yes answers to such questions as "I'm frequently in a hurry," "I really enjoy winning and hate to lose," and "My job is the most important thing in my life" indicates the probability of a "Type A" personality, defined by the Giammatteos as "one who is always pushing, doing, creating, initiating, and who may be headed toward an early death or heart attack."

After orienting yourself to the subject of stress in general and personal stress factors in particular, you'll want to take stock of the attitudes with which you confront your working day. Constructive attitudes for the management of stress will be discussed later. For now, be aware of the following attitudes that promote stress: authoritarianism, intolerance, being overly concerned with what "should be" rather than with what "is," indecisiveness, worry, perfectionism, "stockpiling hurts," magnifying minor irritants, failure to communicate feelings, believing that you are a victim of fate and of your feelings, and needing and seeking love and approval from everyone.

Although this list is not a definitive one, familiarity with these negative attitudes provides one more orientation into the subject of stress and one more preparation for self-analysis and the identification of specific stressors.

Identifying Stressors

The purpose of tracking sources of stress for several weeks is the same as that for tracking time: to become aware of specific problem areas and their patterns of reoccurrence. Gmelch (1981) recommends that school leaders tally, at the end of each day for one week, the most stressful incident (such as confronting a staff member), the most stressful series of related incidents (such as frequent telephone interruptions), and the approximate level of your stress on a scale from one to ten. As with the daily time log, the form of this tracking activity is less important than that you do this preliminary exercise and do it in writing.

After tracking your sources of stress, you might want to compare your stressors with Gmelch's administrative stress index—a list of thirty-five typical stressors identified by educational administrators, including "preparing and allocating budget resources," "trying to resolve differences between/among students," and "being involved in the collective bargaining process." Of these thirty-five stressors, Gmelch identified and ranked the following top ten:

1. Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies
2. Feeling that meetings take up too much time
3. Trying to complete reports and other paperwork on time
4. Trying to gain financial support for programs
5. Trying to resolve personnel conflicts
6. Evaluating staff members' performance
7. Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that I know (colleagues, staff members)
8. Feelings that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day
9. Imposing excessively high expectations on myself
10. Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls

Another study used methodology similar to that of the Social Readjustment Rating Scale. Robert Koff and his colleagues factored and weighted four areas of stress for elementary, middle, and secondary school principals. Conflicts with teachers were consistently ranked as the highest stressor. Irregular events with severe consequences—events in which the administrators felt threatened and powerless—were rated the next most stressful. (Examples include teacher strikes, involuntary transfers, bad publicity, threats and assaults, and legal actions against the school.) Student conflicts were rated below these, though the stress therein increased significantly from elementary to high school. Finally, routine management tasks were consistently ranked as the lowest, most manageable stressor.

All these findings echo what was noted earlier, that stress is integrally related to feelings of powerlessness—feeling out of control. Successful stress management requires not just the identification of your stressors but also the categorizing of them into those that are within your control and those that are not. The distinction will determine your strategy for attacking the stressor, though *all* the various strategies share one trait in common: all return a measure of control to their user.

Managing Controllable Stressors

In any discussion of stress management, one strategy always highlighted is that of time management. Indeed, four of the top ten stressors on Gmelch's list involve use of time: meetings, paperwork, heavy workload, and telephone interruptions. Properly executed, time management creates the balance and control in one's life that Alan Lakein repeatedly emphasizes.

But time management can be subsumed by a larger, more generalized concept, that of "pacing," of consciously regulating the ebb and flow of your life. Time management will help you to do that. So will familiarity with and proper use of the Social Readjustment Rating Scale; for instance, if you are aware that you've recently experienced a high number of life change events, you should consider consciously forgoing another controllable change—moving to a new neighborhood, for example, or taking classes toward your Ph.D.

You can also pace yourself by regulating what Donald Dudley and Elton Welke refer to as naturally occurring cycles of "activation and withdrawal." While it is normal to alternate between periods of outward-reaching activity and periods of quiet renewal, the authors caution against abrupt swings between either extreme:

> If your customary manner is type A, fast-paced, try to slow down by mild degrees in a uniform way rather than suddenly embracing total relaxation between outbursts of activity. In the same way, if you are a classic type B, relaxed and calm, try to modestly pick up your life tempo uniformly across periods of both work and play.

Another strategy for managing stress is creative problem-solving. The applicability of problem-solving to stress management lies in the fact that delays in confronting problems inevitably tend to magnify them. Such procrastination not only allows the problem situation to deteriorate, but also allows mental mushrooming of the problem—mental exaggeration that is disproportionate to the problem's actual severity.

A third strategy in the management of stress—control of communications—is discussed in chapter 11. The importance of skillful communication to stress management becomes clearer as one recalls that authoritarianism (excessively directive communications), intolerance (excessively negative communications), and failure to express feelings (excessively repressive communications) are three key promoters of stress. It's important to recognize that the words you use—and choose not to use—don't merely describe reality; they create it.

Job and role clarification also contribute significantly to the management of stress. A job can be inherently stressful (hence worsening each daily occasion of stress) if one's role is unclear or subject to conflicting expectations, or if the job involves too much work, too little work, too little opportunity for achievement, and/or inadequate performance evaluation.

"Preventive management," assert James and Jonathan Quick, is the key to reducing this kind of stress. While the authors recommend several specific management tools for the clarification and restructuring of jobs/roles, any process that analyzes and sets out, in writing, the expectations inherent to each job is useful. Peter Drucker's well-known system of "Management by Objectives" is a prime example.

Finally, controllable stressors can be confronted one at a time via formalized methods of frontal attack. Gmelch (1981) offers the following systematic procedure:

1. Identify your most bothersome stressors and select *one* to resolve.
2. Search for the causes of this stressful event.
3. Generate a set of possible solutions to remedy the causes.
4. Specify a plan of action you will take to alleviate one cause.
5. Develop a time table to implement your plan of action.
6. Set a date and method for how you will follow up and evaluate the effectiveness of your plan.
7. Investigate the potential problems or unintended consequences (additional stress) your action plan may have created.

At the risk of belaboring the obvious, one last management strategy for controllable stressors is worthy of mention before moving on to the subject of uncontrollable stressors: that strategy is simply to ask for help. Management consultants, self-help books, professional associations, central administration, your professional peer group, the school advisory council or other parent committees, and professional analysts can all help to generate solutions to stressful situations. Don't suffer in silence. Use them.

Managing Uncontrollable Stressors

When stressors are beyond your personal control (for example, statewide budget cuts, a personality conflict with your immediate superior), you must seek to reduce stress in the one area left to you: within yourself. This is accomplished through a series of strategies that build up your resistance to stress—that inoculate you, so to speak, and increase your level of tolerance.

General physical health and well-being are fundamental here. The importance of regular exercise, good eating habits, and periods of recreation are cliches that nevertheless merit repeating.

Because stress is such a subjective phenomenon, a variety of mental skills work to fight stress on its home ground—in the mind. Many of these skills—meditation, prayer, biofeedback, yoga, the relaxation response—increase one's inner sense of calm well-being. "Mental imagery"—the conscious production of positive mental scenes—is also often suggested as a means of manipulating one's sympathetic nervous system into a state of relaxation.

James Manuso recommends the learning of a "quieting response"—a reaction to minor daily irritations in which "one takes two deliberate deep breaths, paying attention to relaxing the jaw, the shoulders and tongue, and one tells himself he will not permit his body to get involved in this. This breaks the sequence of the stress response."

Similarly, "thought stopping" is a means of quieting internal anxiety. In thought stopping, one learns to banish obsessive or worrisome thoughts by mentally shouting "Stop!" and then insisting to oneself that "I'm not going to think about that now." After this mental interruption, the individual then consciously seeks an alternative thought or activity with which to become involved.

Since we began by discussing attitudes, it's appropriate that we circle back as we approach our close. The attitude most relevant to this section is *tolerance*—tolerance of individuals unlike ourselves and of situations unlike those we desire. In support, the Giammatteos state that "tolerance demands serenity on our part to become aware and then to make decisions about our response to the environment, people, and philosophies in it."

Thus far we have considered ways school administrators can manage their own stress. As leaders of their organizations, however, their responsibilities extend beyond themselves to the welfare of their employees.

Managing Stress in the Organization

School administrators, following the example of corporate executives, are taking a more active role as managers of stress in their organizations. The cost of stress in absenteeism, inefficiency, and resignations from burnout is high enough, many administrators recognize, to warrant effective counter measures.

Stress reduction in the organization takes two forms. One approach, not yet as common in schools as in the business world, operates on the assumption that organizations themselves can produce stress in their employees. The role of managers is to examine the work environment for causes of job stress and take steps to reduce it. Second, many school districts, again following the lead of businesses, have initiated "wellness programs," which encourage their employees to stay fit and lead healthy lives; stress reduction is a normal component of these programs.

Job Stress and Teacher Stress

Of course, a certain amount of stress in the workplace is unavoidable and even desirable: high standards and urgent deadlines motivate us to perform well. But stress also results when, for example, the heating and ventilating system doesn't work, employees are not appropriately involved in decisions, and there are conflicting expectations for what employees are to do. This kind of stress can be avoided simply by good management practices.

According to Nico van Dijkhuizen, a psychologist who has studied stress in middle management for the Royal Netherlands Navy, a stress-producing organization can be recognized by the following "signals": decreased work performance, high absenteeism (some employees may partially absent themselves by showing up at work but avoiding certain tasks or people), high staff turnover, irritability and interpersonal conflict, and decline in staff members' mutual support (for example, they show less interest in one another's problems). Van Dijkhuizen also suggests paying attention to the behaviors of individual staff members. Signs of stress include increased smoking, sleeplessness, sudden changes in clothing habits, eating too little or too much, excessive drinking, and high blood pressure.

If you observe these symptoms in the staff members of your school or district, careful diagnosis of the causes is in order. Van Dijkhuizen lists potential contributors to stress in an organization and recommends corrective steps. Several of these checkpoints are presented here along with their possible applications in schools. First is the physical job-environment; look for such conditions as student disorder, litter, and excessive noise levels. Second, the organizational structure, if too hierarchical, may need to be flattened. Current efforts to create a more professional (less bureaucratic) work environment for teachers may well lead to a reduction in the stress level of teaching. Third, jobs may need to be restructured to achieve a better fit between employees and the organization. Van Dijkhuizen emphasizes that not all employees are alike: some thrive on challenge whereas others may need to have their workloads reduced. Fourth, "information needs to be channelled and apportioned very carefully" so that "all employees get the right information at the right time."

Fifth is the need for clarity. Every employee needs to know not only what he or she must do and what others expect, but must also know "general company policies and the company's results." Says van Dijkhuizen: "Such clarity enables one to place one's own job in a broader perspective, bringing positive effects to self-esteem." In schools, this need will be met if the principal clearly communicates the school's mission and regularly informs teachers and students of their progress toward achieving that mission.

Sixth is "support from superior and colleagues." Van Dijkhuizen says his research indicates that such support softens the effects of stress on employees' lives. Collegial support is particularly necessary for teachers, because the traditional school structure isolates teachers from one another and makes it difficult for them to receive the encouragement and support of their colleagues.

Finally, when employees are given the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting their work, they often experience "more clarity, less conflicts and better relations with others." Practical ways to involve teachers and other staff members in school decisions are given in chapter 7.

Most of the attention to reduction of stress in schools appropriately focuses on the work environment of teachers. Betsy Schlansker notes research indicating "that as many as 25 percent of K-12 teachers may be experiencing a damaging degree of burnout." In her own survey of teachers, five of the ten most stressful events were "management tensions": "notification of unsatisfactory performance; involuntary transfer; denial of promotion or advancement; overcrowded classrooms; and disagreements with supervisors." Schlansker says that "these are areas in which the principal could intervene, mediate, or in some way provide support."

Diane Frey and Joseph Young advise principals to watch for these symptoms of teacher burnout: "apathy, fatigue, tension, frustration, boredom, irritability, detachment, rigidity, demoralization, hopelessness, and a sense of not being appreciated." Then they suggest a number of actions principals can take to alleviate teachers' stress. Notice that several of the actions listed below correspond with the checkpoints on van Dijkhuizen's list of organizational stressors.

- Eliminate unnecessary stress through careful planning; for example, give teachers adequate notice of mandatory meetings.
- Maintain a high praise/criticism ratio (at least 3:1).
- Provide "inservice workshops on stress management, relaxation, visual imagery, biofeedback, and cognitive restructuring."
- Establish a support network that allows teachers to share problems and resources.
- "Identify potentially exhausting jobs and rotate teachers periodically out of these positions."
- Provide opportunity for teachers to express their ideas and to participate in decisions relevant to them.
- Help teachers "to lower unrealistic expectations" for themselves.
- Encourage the use of humor—"the ability to laugh at oneself can help one survive even the worst situations."

When Raymond Calabrese polled a sample of teachers to find out which of their stress factors were most under the control of the principal, they identified four areas: "elimination of ambiguous policies; increase of visible support; improved communications and directions; and increased positive feedback." Three of these items, he notes, "relate directly to the principal's ability to communicate."

In sum, school leaders who expect excellence from their teaching staffs must provide a proportionate degree of support. In addition to demonstrating their own caring and assistance, principals can lead the faculty in creating networks of collegial sharing so teachers can support one another.

Wellness Programs

An increasingly popular districtwide strategy for combatting health and stress problems is the employee wellness program. During the past decade many school districts have followed the lead of PepsiCo, IBM, Kodak, and other corporations in instituting programs that typically involve organized recreation, workshops on health issues (such as stress management, nutrition, safe living, alcohol dependency, exercise), stop-smoking campaigns, medical tests, and inducements for regular doctor checkups. Some districts add activities and instruction for students and the community as part of their public relations efforts.

Through employee wellness programs, school districts seek such benefits as higher productivity, fewer substitutes, positive adult role models for students, and the possibility of reduced health insurance premiums. A reduction in premiums may be possible if the wellness program leads to a significant decrease in insurance claims by employees and if the insurance company offers a discount for reduced claims (not all do).

According to data in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (cited by Dennis Colacino and Michael Cohen), 1.3 percent of the U.S. population are responsible for half of all hospital costs. These high-cost patients, say Colacino and Cohen, are "far more likely to smoke, be overweight, abuse alcohol and possess an adverse life-style." If wellness programs can lead such individuals to adopt more healthy habits, it is obvious that these programs can dramatically affect health costs, as well as reduce the stress that results from abuse of one's body.

Conclusion

The successful management of time and stress cannot be exercised in a vacuum. Nearly all the strategies, and even some of the attitudes, require a team approach. Minimally, that team consists of you and your secretary, since the secretary is the administrator's partner in production.

Programs for time and stress management should encompass the leader's support staff and colleagues and, better yet, even filter upwards. Many of the time/stress management strategies discussed—delegation, role clarification and restructuring, rejecting monkeys, communication skills—are dependent upon contact with and cooperation from the leader's colleagues.

But more significantly, these programs involve your coworkers because you are in a leadership role and are therefore—for better or for worse—a role model whose attitudes and practices set the tone for the entire office. And as a role model, your staff can perceive you in one of three ways: passively ineffectual in the management of time and stress; actively detrimental in the management of time and stress (a time-waster and stress-carrier); or worthy of emulation in the management of time and stress—a true leader.

Managing time. Managing stress. Concentrating on effectiveness, contribution, and purpose. What results from accepting these challenges? As usual, Peter Drucker says it well:

> What is being developed here is not information, but character: foresight, self-reliance, courage. What is being developed here, in other words, is leadership—not the leadership of brilliance and genius, to be sure, but the much more modest yet more enduring leadership of dedication, determination, and serious purpose.

Chapter 15

Managing Conflict

John Lindelow and James J. Scott

Conflict is a natural part of human existence. It is as surely a companion of life as change, death, and taxes.

Conflict exists on many levels and takes many different forms. Within society, there are many focal points of conflict, where numerous "forces" seem to clash time and again. One of these focal points is the public school administrator. As James Lipham and James Hoeh, Jr., state, "All institutional roles, particularly those in public institutions, are subject to numerous sources and types of disagreement or conflict. But few seem so fraught with conflict potential as that of the public school principal." Larry Cuban observes that "conflict is the DNA of the superintendency. The very nature of the roles that school chiefs must play makes conflict inevitable."

Because conflict plays a recurring role in the lives of school principals and superintendents, those who hold these positions must learn to manage conflict effectively and turn it toward constructive ends. To do this, they must understand conflict—what it is, where it comes from, and how it develops and dissipates. They must, in addition, possess the skills necessary to manage conflict effectively.

The Value of Conflict

As Stephen Robbins notes, the word *conflict* has a negative connotation for most individuals. Indeed, many if not most conflict situations are disturbing to participants and observers alike, and many conflicts lead to destructive ends.

But as many veteran administrators have recognized, conflict is a two-sided coin. Conflict can indeed be disruptive and destructive. But it can also be a source of creativity and constructive action. Many thoughtful people even consider conflict to be "the Mother of creativity." Gordon Lippitt lists a number of negative and *positive* effects of conflict. On the negative side, it

- diverts energy from the task at hand
- destroys morale
- polarizes individuals and groups
- deepens differences
- obstructs cooperative action
- produces irresponsible behavior

- creates suspicion and distrust
- decreases productivity

But on the positive side, conflict

- opens up an issue in a confronting manner
- develops clarification of an issue
- increases involvement
- improves problem-solving quality
- provides more spontaneity in communication
- is needed for growth
- strengthens a relationship when creatively resolved

Conflict can be a valuable source of organizational renewal. According to Richard Schmuck and colleagues, some conflicts "may even provide a creative tension that has the effect of improving school performance." Other conflicts, these authors are quick to add, can seriously weaken a school's instructional program and should be resolved promptly.

Robbins—a strong believer in the value of conflict—has even included in his book a chapter on stimulating conflict within organizations by disrupting communications and altering organizational structure. "Organizations that do not stimulate conflict," he states, "increase the probability of stagnant thinking, inadequate decisions, and at the extreme, organizational demise." Research supporting this contention comes from Jay Hall and Martha Williams (quoted by Robbins), who found that "established groups tended to improve more when there was conflict among members than when there was fairly close agreement."

Conflict in school settings can help prevent teachers and administrators from ignoring what is best for students, says Robert Maidment, who advises principals to "encourage legitimate resistance." "When principals fully embrace the notion that teachers have both the right and the responsibility for legitimate resistance, it again places conflict in a proper—and positive—perspective," he says.

Thus, the effective school administrator should not seek simply to *resolve* all conflicts that arise in the school; rather, he or she should attempt to *manage* conflict by maximizing constructive conflict and minimizing destructive conflict.

The next section explores the nature of conflict. With a better understanding of conflict, the reader can move on to the next two sections, which describe philosophies of conflict management and techniques of managing conflicts. The chapter ends with some comments on training for conflict resolution.

Understanding Conflict

Just what is conflict? *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* defines it as the "clash, competition, or mutual interference of opposing or incompatible forces or qualities (as ideas, interests, wills)." A similar definition is provided by Robbins, who describes conflict as "all kinds of opposition or antagonistic interaction." Our main focus in this chapter is on social conflict—conflict between individuals and conflict between groups common to the school environment.

Numerous writers have gone beyond simple definitions of conflict and have sought to more fully characterize conflict by identifying *types* of conflict, *sources* of conflict, and *stages* of conflict. These three views of conflict—discussed in turn below—are valuable for gaining a better understanding of conflict and conflict management in school settings.

Types of Conflict

One typology of conflict already mentioned is that of constructive and destructive conflict. Constructive or "functional" conflicts, as Robbins states, "support the goals of the organization and improve performance." Destructive or "dysfunctional" conflicts, on the other hand, hinder organizational performance and should be "eradicated."

"The demarcation between functional and dysfunctional is neither clear nor precise," Robbins continues.

> No level of conflict can be adopted at face value as acceptable or unacceptable. . . . The level that creates healthy and positive involvement towards one group's goals, may in another group or in the same group at another time, be highly dysfunctional, requiring immediate conciliatory attention by the administrator.

Warren Schmidt and Robert Tannenbaum classify conflict according to the four kinds of issues over which people can disagree. First, disagreement can occur over *facts,* as when two parties "are aware of different pieces of relevant information, accept or reject different information as factual, or have differing impressions of their respective power and authority." Second, disagreement can occur over *goals*—"the desirable objectives of a department, division, section, or of a specific position within the organization." Third, people can disagree over *methods*—the procedures and strategies for getting from here to there. And fourth, disagreement can occur over *values* or *ethics*—the "way power should be exercised."

Stephen Bailey suggests another way of classifying conflict—by its severity or quality. At the first level of conflict severity, there is "an endless simmer of petty personality conflicts reflecting the chemistry and foibles of interacting humans." The wise administrator controls such conflicts by common-sense measures: separating antagonists, redefining roles, and appealing "to the maturity, good sense, and common organizational goals of everyone concerned." Ultimately, says Bailey, the administrator "settles for a low hum of contentiousness as a necessary—and at times healthy—noise of the human condition."

The second level of conflict severity involves differences over program and budget matters. "These are the daily-diet conflicts that most educational administrators spend the overwhelming part of their time adjudicating and managing," states Bailey.

Level three of conflict severity is that of "revolutionary" conflict, which involves "the legitimacy of regime" rather than program priorities. The wisest course in such crisis situations, Bailey offers, is to redress the grievances that are stimulating the revolution—assuming, of course, that such grievances are legitimate.

Sources of Conflict

A fuller understanding of conflict can be gained by considering conflict's origins. Four primary sources within the school can be identified: communications problems, organizational structure, "human" factors such as personality, and limited resources.

Communications Problems

Much of the conflict in organizations can be traced to faulty communications. For instance, staff members who do not receive regular feedback about their performance may experience poor morale that manifests itself in negative remarks or unwillingness to follow management's directives. Lack of communications between departments can lead to destructive competition. Ill-defined expectations, hidden agendas, lack of candor, and absence of trust are some additional examples of breakdowns in communications that can induce conflict.

Communications problems that are organizational in scope can be difficult to resolve without the assistance of a trained consultant. In cases of interpersonal conflict where communications problems appear to be the source of the conflict, simply bringing the parties together in a problem-solving session can often resolve the conflict. If one party seems to have difficulty "hearing" what the other is saying, communications exercises such as paraphrasing (as discussed in chapter 11) may be of help.

Organizational Structure

The structure of the organization is another possible source of conflict. One study reported by Robbins found that conflict is more likely when jobs are less structured and routinized. Put another way, the greater the extent to which individuals within an organization are permitted to think for themselves instead of routinely following instructions, the greater the likelihood that disagreements will arise over the course of action to follow.

For example, if teachers are required to employ particular methods of instruction, then the methods used by any one teacher are unlikely to generate controversy. But if teachers are given considerable latitude in choosing methods of instruction, some teachers may use methods that provoke debate. Within limits, controversy generated in such a fashion is a reasonable tradeoff for the increased creativity and flexibility that accrue to an organization when it allows its members some latitude in performing their functions.

The degree to which an organization's structure allows its employees to participate in decision-making also has an effect on conflict. As participation increases, so does the rate of conflict, as several other studies reported by Robbins show. Although the overall *number* of conflicts went up with participation, the number of *major incidents* of conflict went down. Participation in decision-making, Robbins suggests, "permits a greater opportunity for the expression of existing disputes and allows more occasions for disagreements to arise." The same opportunity to express minor conflicts, however, may "prevent minor irritations from developing into major incidents."

Another study discussed by Robbins indicates that "power can facilitate coordination and concurrently reduce conflict." Up to a certain limit, increasing a school principal's formal authority can reduce conflict between the principal and the staff.

Human Factors

In addition to communications and structural sources, conflict can arise from "human factors" within an organization. Whereas communications and structural factors can, in part, be controlled by an administrator, human factors are largely beyond his or her control. Personality traits that have been found to correlate with increased conflict are high authoritarianism, high dogmatism, and low self-esteem. One of the most powerful "human" sources of conflict is differing value or goal systems, which are quite often impossible to change and can only be "managed."

Limited Resources

Another source of conflict is of immediate practical concern to the school administrator—competition over limited resources. When an organization has an abundance of resources, those resources can easily be allocated so that all the parties involved are convinced that they are getting their fair share. When resources are limited, however, allocating those resources so that all concerned receive what they think they deserve becomes much more difficult.

When the science department needs new bunsen burners and the library needs to replace some books but the funds are not available to do both, the principal must decide who gets what. Conflict arises as each department tries to convince the principal that its needs are more pressing than those of the other departments. No matter what decision the principal makes, somebody is going to be dissatisfied. It is the principal's job to ensure that all parties feel they have been treated fairly, even though they may not get what they want.

At the district level, conflict can develop when teachers believe they need to be paid more and taxpayers refuse to provide the necessary funds. Failure to resolve such conflicts can lead to long and costly teachers' strikes.

Stages of Conflict

Another means of diagnosing conflict is by examining its dynamics. Schmidt and Tannenbaum identify the following five stages of conflict development:

> *The phase of anticipation*, in which, for example, a manager knows of an impending change and projects its consequences.
>
> *The phase of conscious, but unexpressed, difference.* Word leaks out about the change, and a feeling of tension begins to build in the organization.
>
> *The phase of discussion.* Information is formally presented about the change. Differing opinions begin to emerge.
>
> *The phase of open dispute.* Differences become more sharply and explicitly defined.
>
> *The phase of open conflict.* Each disputant tries to force his or her view on the others. The only possible outcomes now are win, lose, or compromise.

Other authors dissect the dynamics of conflict differently, and most include a stage of "relaxation" after the conflict has peaked.

Conflict management is usually more effective when the administrator intervenes in the early stages of conflict. As the conflict develops through different stages, different management techniques become useful. "Techniques of prevention and resolution adequate for the incipient stages of conflict are unlikely to be useful during the crisis stage," states Bailey, "and they tend to be irrelevant at the stage of relaxation."

> When conflict is incipient, or in early stages of virulence, a sensitive administrator may release dangerous tension with a special meeting or a joke. When the storm is raging, certain types of meetings become impossible, and the very notion of jokes becomes obscene. When exhaustion is followed by a new-found harmony, the administrator's best therapy may be "natural healing," rather than any conscious strategy.

Philosophies of Conflict Management

According to Robbins, there are three primary philosophies of conflict management. What he calls the "traditional" philosophy prevailed from the late nineteenth century into the 1940s; in this philosophy, "*all* conflicts were seen as destructive and it was management's role to rid the organization of them." The second philosophy, the "behavioral" view, supplanted the traditional philosophy a few decades ago and still prevails in most organizations. The behavioral view differs from the traditional philosophy in accepting conflict as a normal part of an organization's functioning, but it still sees conflict as essentially negative. Hence, the behavioralists concentrate almost entirely on finding ways of resolving conflict.

Robbins advocates a third approach: the "interactionist" philosophy. This approach "recognizes the absolute necessity of conflict," explicitly encourages conflict at times, "defines conflict management to include stimulation as well as resolution methods," and "considers the management of conflict as a major responsibility of all administrators." Indeed, an increase in constructive conflict may be called for in some organizations that have lost their spark of creativity or in which apathy has reached epidemic proportions.

Although there may be times when stirring the pot may be the best remedy for an ailing school or district, most of the conflict management techniques discussed in this chapter deal either with resolving conflict or with channeling potentially destructive conflict into constructive ends. This emphasis on conflict resolution recognizes that the public schools are already in a state of rapid change, with concomitant conflict; that few administrators feel the need to stimulate more conflict, since there is already an overabundance in the schools; and that most administrators are more interested in learning how to manage the conflict that already exists in the schools.

Techniques for Managing Conflict

There are as many methods for resolving conflicts as there are types of conflict and theories about how conflicts should be managed. As we shall see at the end of this section, no one method works best in all circumstances. Hence it is important for the administrator to be aware of all possible conflict management techniques, selecting from them as the situation warrants.

In this section we consider such techniques as avoidance, containment of conflicts by individualizing them, creation of goals to which conflicting parties can agree to, creative problem-solving, compromise and the use of a third party, changes in the organization's structure, use of authority to arbitrate conflicts, and reconciliation of the parties after the conflict has been resolved.

Avoiding Conflict

"The most natural manner in which all animals, including man, eliminate conflict is to avoid it," states Robbins. If Harmon Zeigler and his colleagues are right in saying that school superintendents, with their college degrees from schools of education, are "trained in the tenets of an ideology that defines conflict as pathological and consensus as the most legitimate basis of a decision," then it seems that school superintendents—and, to a lesser extent, school principals— would naturally find avoidance very appealing.

Administrators who do not handle anxiety well are most likely to seek ways of avoiding conflict. Monte Blue says that some administrators will try to reduce the level of organizational conflict—whether it is resolved or not—

in an attempt to lessen the personal anxiety that they feel. Administrators who can handle anxiety can usually cope with conflict; those who cannot "cope well with even low levels of conflict or anxiety generally move into other positions or professions to avoid high levels of stress," Blue says.

Avoidance techniques include ignoring conflict, procrastination, isolation, withholding feelings or beliefs, staffing with like-minded people, and "smoothing." Although avoiding conflict may seem like "the wrong thing to do," it is often a valuable short-term alternative.

Ignoring and Procrastinating

Whenever possible, humans withdraw from conflict and ignore the situation if they can. Sometimes this instinctive response is the best one available. Events often reach their own state of equilibrium, and intervention may be either unnecessary or counterproductive.

A variation of ignoring is procrastination or "deciding not to decide," which may, at times, also be a valuable short-term management strategy. The administrator may need more information or time to understand a situation or may wait for the situation to take clearer form before taking action. Taking a "wait and see" attitude may be the best strategy in these cases. As Maidment puts it, it is "better to regroup than to re-grope."

Deciding when to intervene and "uncover" conflict can be difficult. The administrator must decide whether bringing out a conflict will have destructive or constructive consequences. Low levels of communications and problem-solving skills and low levels of trust among school staff may well engender destructive outcomes. Schmuck and his colleagues state that "uncovering conflict, then, involves a certain risk."

Isolating Conflicting Parties

A manager can avoid conflict between two potentially explosive individuals by isolating them in the organization so that they seldom interact. Two individuals may do this themselves, as Robbins notes, and stake out distinct, nonoverlapping territories. Often, an administrator and a subordinate will use this technique. "In those cases where the employee sees no other viable alternative to his present job and his superior finds the employee's performance to be satisfactory, we can expect this avoidance technique to be effective," says Robbins.

Withholding Feelings

In cases where two individuals find it impossible to avoid each other, each may withhold stating his or her feelings or beliefs in the presence of the other. Such mutual ignoring, of course, only conceals differences, but it does avoid overt confrontation.

Seeking Like-Minded People

Another means of avoiding conflict is to staff the school with like-minded people. This approach may be appropriate in schools that are extremely conflict torn because of diverse viewpoints. But "the manager who uses this approach consistently runs the risk of reducing the total creativity of the staff," state Schmidt and Tannenbaum. "When everyone in the room thinks the same thing, no one is thinking very much."

Smoothing

"Smoothing" is the process of playing down differences between conflicting parties while emphasizing their common interests. Issues about which there are differences are not discussed, while areas of agreement are stressed. Although smoothing is often relied on, any resolution it achieves will be only superficial; the differences remain and the conflict is only postponed.

Avoiding conflicts in the ways outlined above can be valuable for managing conflict in some situations, especially minor conflicts. When employed to manage major conflicts, however, the same techniques can lead to expansion of the conflict, instead of containment. In the arena of community conflict, for example, Zeigler and his colleagues note that "the literature on fluoridation and school desegregation strongly supports the notion that avoidance leads to increased lay participation. Increased lay participation leads to a more complex management problem."

Individualizing Conflict

Zeigler and his colleagues note that many potential conflicts between school administrators and members of the general public can be contained by individualizing them. These researchers observe that most communications between school administrators and members of the general public are concerned with redressing individual grievances rather than with arguments over school policies.

> The degree to which such complaints can be resolved without resorting to policy modification will be an important predictor of the extent to which conflict can be contained. If individual requests are treated responsively, collective action is less likely to take place.

The following hypothetical example shows how individualizing conflict might work: A high school has a mandatory P.E. program that, for a few weeks out of the year, involves boys playing football. Brad broke his leg playing football several years ago, and—despite his doctor's assurances that the injury is completely healed—his parents want to make sure it doesn't happen again. Accordingly, they want Brad held out of the football portion of the P.E. program.

If the principal takes the attitude that rules are rules and there can be no exceptions, Brad's parents may well try to enlist citizen support for their side. Eventually, what started off as an individual grievance may blossom into a major conflict over the role P.E. should play in an educational program. However, if the principal agrees that Brad's parents have a point and accommodates their wishes—perhaps by working out an alternative P.E. program for Brad for that period when the other boys are playing football—then the matter will probably go no further.

Creating Superordinate Goals

Another technique for managing conflict is the creation of a superordinate goal—a highly valued goal that two conflicting parties can reach only by cooperating with each other. As Robbins explains, "The cooperative environment grows as effort is directed away from concern with separate and independent units to recognition that the conflicting units are part of a larger group." Superordinate goals are popular because of their promise of "win-win" solutions.

Given that all the people involved in the school organization share one overriding goal—educating the children—and given that administrators and teachers have much in common, it would appear that using superordinate goals would be one of the most effective conflict management techniques available at the school building level. However, a word of caution is in order. First, actual superordinate goals that supersede the conflicting parties' individual goals are difficult to create, and manufacturing phantom superordinate goals will fool no one. Second, the mutual trust and confidence needed for conflicting parties to work together are often absent. Finally, as Robbins says, the effectiveness of superordinate goals may be severely limited in cases where conflict originates from personal-behavior differences.

Creative Problem-Solving

> Had the six blind men who came into contact with different parts of the same elephant pooled their information, they would have arrived at a more accurate description of the animal. In the same way, many problems can be seen clearly, wholly, and in perspective only if the individuals who see different aspects can come together and pool their information. (Schmidt and Tannenbaum)

Mutual problem-solving, some writers suggest, is often the best means for resolving social conflict. Conflicts often exist because of a lack of or problems in communicating. Bringing conflicting parties together to discuss their differences can, if properly managed, lead to increased understanding, clarification of differences, and constructive collaboration.

Schmidt and Tannenbaum provide several guidelines for conducting an effective problem-solving session. The administrator should:

- welcome the existence of differences within the organization as a valuable resource
- listen with understanding rather than evaluation
- recognize and accept the feelings of the individuals involved
- clarify the nature of the conflict
- indicate who will make the decision being discussed
- suggest procedures and ground rules for resolving the differences
- create appropriate vehicles for communication among the disputing parties
- encourage the separation of ideas from the people who propose them

Problem-solving is especially valuable for resolving conflicts that arise from communications problems. In a problem-solving session, a great deal of communication takes place. Facts, goals, and strategies are discussed and clarified. Positions become understood. Areas for potential compromise are discovered. Faulty perceptions are corrected.

When group members have varied opinions on some issue yet are not entrenched in their positions, problem-solving sessions can be used to channel the energy generated by conflict into creative solution making. As Robbins notes, however, "problem solving is inherently weak in regard to conflicts based on differing value systems—one of the primary sources of conflict." Problem-solving can elucidate the differences in two value systems, but argument can rarely alter deeply held beliefs. Forced problem-solving between two parties with incompatible value systems, Robbins observes, "only widens the differences and entrenches each of the participants deeper into his position—for all intents and purposes probably increasing, and certainly not lessening, the level of conflict."

Compromise and Use of a Third Party

Compromise is probably the most widely used technique for resolving conflict. Compromise can be generated internally as in a problem-solving session, or it can be externally generated by a third-party mediator or arbitrator.

Compromise does not result in clear winners and losers, and it requires each conflicting party to give up something. "The idea is that it is better to have half a loaf than none at all," says Mary Nebgen. Compromise is the norm in legislative decision-making. And unlike avoidance techniques, Robbins states, "it does result in a decision, though not an optimum one for either party."

Compromise works best, states Nebgen, when "the cooperative interests of the bargainers are stronger than their competitive interests" and when both parties have ample resources with which to bargain.

Often, a building administrator will find himself or herself in the position of a third-party arbitrator or mediator. Two individuals or groups will present the principal with conflicting ideas or requests. The groups may ask the principal to make a decision, or the principal—exercising his or her positional power—may decide to make the decision. The principal can act as a mediator, clarifying and facilitating communication between the two parties, or can act as an arbitrator, making the final decision after both sides have presented their claims. And if the principal is one of the conflicting parties, he or she may call for a neutral third party to help settle the dispute.

Maidment advises administrators to "intervene cautiously" in a dispute between two staff members.

> An intervention is appropriate whenever (1) the issue is unduly prolonged, (2) other staff members enter the fray and take sides, or (3) the performance of either disputant is adversely affected. The last factor is a critical one requiring immediate attention.

Warning administrators to proceed cautiously, Maidment says, "Those in conflict are 'experts'—they're familiar with the issue, its causes, and its emotional fallout." When intervening, the administrator should talk separately with each party—listening carefully and probing for hidden agendas—and then meet again separately with each party to share observations. Only then, says Maidment, should the disputants meet together to attempt a resolution, either by themselves or with the administrator acting as an "observer, mediator, or adjudicator depending on the complexity, severity, and intensity of the dispute."

If the parties to a conflict accept a compromise simply because each side recognizes that it lacks the power to impose its will on the other, then the compromise is in danger the moment the balance of power between the competing factions changes. However, if the parties to a conflict accept a compromise because each side believes the compromise proposal is a *reasonable* one, then the compromise may prove to be a long-term solution to the conflict.

It follows that the moderator of a dispute should work closely with both sides to develop a compromise that both sides consider to be fair, rather than one that each side grudgingly accepts for lack of an alternative.

Changes in Organizational Structure

Conflicts can often be successfully managed by making changes in the structure of the organization. Group members can be transferred or exchanged, special coordinating or conflict management positions can be created, the communications process can be facilitated with interlocking team structures, grievance and appeal systems can be created, and the number of subunits in the organization can be altered.

Separating conflicting parties, as discussed earlier, is one means of reducing conflict. In some cases, however—as when two departments or other subunits are in conflict—it may make more sense to *increase* contact between the conflicting parties. When this is done, barriers to communication are often reduced.

Robbins cites the example of a major company in which two departments were in continual conflict. The management had the two supervisors switch jobs for six months, a move that "promoted greater understanding and reduced intergroup conflict as the modified views filtered down" through each department.

Another means of enhancing communication between conflicting departments is to create a position of "coordinator" of the two groups. The coordinator would perform functions in both departments and integrate their functions.

Improved intraorganizational communication can also be gained by creating a system of interlocking management teams in the school or district, as Schmuck and his colleagues suggest. The advantage of such a "multiunit school," state these authors, "is that it offers a communicative link between each hierarchical level and each formal subsystem." In such schools, everyone "knows someone who can communicate directly with the leadership team, and this arrangement permits direct managerial contact with those who may be in conflict."

Small organizations, such as elementary schools, may deal with conflict through regular administrative channels. But more complex organizations, such as school districts, "should have special formal structures alongside the regular managerial hierarchy for this purpose," state Schmuck and cowriters.

Special grievance and appeal systems can be designed to allow organizational members to challenge the rulings of superiors. "By giving the subordinate an alternative to unsatisfactory directives of his superior," states Robbins, this technique "can act to reduce conflict by requiring the superior to rethink the legitimacy of the demands he makes upon his subordinates."

Some research has shown that as organizations become more complex, more conflict occurs. Thus, minimizing the number of administrative subunits may reduce conflict. This approach, however, may be overly simplistic; a complex organization may well function smoothly if designed appropriately.

Too much stress on unity and common organizational goals may also be a source of conflict, state Schmuck and colleagues, especially "when the philosophies and instructional styles of faculty members are highly varied." Conflict in such schools may be successfully managed "by allowing for planned pluralism or school structures in which there are several teams, houses within schools, even schools within schools."

Authoritative Command

In hierarchical organizational structures, states Robbins, "the authority of a higher-ranking individual is the most frequent resolvent of interpersonal or intergroup conflict." In using authoritative command for intergroup conflicts, the principal is, in effect, deciding to be the third-party arbitrator. When the principal uses authority to settle disputes with subordinates, he or she is simply using the traditional power of position to overrule the subordinate.

"Individuals in organizations, with rare exceptions, recognize and accept the authority of their superiors," states Robbins. "Though they may not be in agreement with these decisions, they will almost always abide by them."

Authoritative command can solve conflicts quickly and neatly. The overuse or misuse of authoritative command, without meaningful input from subordinates, can foment a more serious kind of conflict—challenge to the legitimacy of authority.

The use of force to settle disputes, states Nebgen, "may be most usefully applied to conflicts which arise out of differing goals or values of special interest groups and interpersonal provocation." If the opposing parties are firmly entrenched in their positions and there is little chance for compromise, "only forcing the issue will settle the problem."

As emphasized throughout this handbook, the effective leader utilizes a variety of leadership styles in managing the school, including, at times, an authoritative style. And when the leader decides to settle an issue through authoritative command, or by any other means for that matter, he or she should clearly communicate how the matter will be settled *before* the process begins.

Putting the Pieces Back Together

When a conflict ends because one side succeeds in imposing its will on the other, a higher authority imposes its will upon both, or both sides have exhausted their resources and agreed to a compromise through necessity, a substantial residue of ill-feeling and dissatisfaction may remain. Under such circumstances, an administrator should make a conscious effort to reconcile the conflicting parties and create an atmosphere conducive to everyone working together once again.

One example of such a situation is a teachers' strike, which usually ends only when one side has outlasted the other or each side agrees to a compromise because both sides fear they lack the resources needed to win. It is true, of course, that occasionally a strike is ended because someone comes up with a proposal that both sides genuinely believe to be fair, but this is probably an exception rather than the rule.

A publication of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), quoted by J. William Jones, offers some practical advice to school superintendents who are faced with the problem of what to do after a strike is over. The superintendent must "move quickly to meet the deep feelings of guilt, defeat, victory, anger, envy and hate" left over from the strike. The best way to do that is "to refocus differing segments of the educational community from their hard-fought polarized positions to a neutral meeting ground—*the education of children.*" In addition, the AASA offers the following tips to supervisors:

- Anticipate the emotions of all groups
- Foster a climate for educational renewal
- Totally brief all staff on new contract terminology
- Launch a community and teacher involvement program

Jones offers "Six Points for Principals" who are faced with the aftermath of a strike:

1. The principal must be consistent in his or her dealings with everyone; no favorites, no good guys or bad guys. Any deviation from total consistency will exacerbate the problems left over from the strike.
2. The principal must focus on support for students, particularly through the instructional program. In all cases, the principal must ask, "What's best for students?"
3. The principal must be firm in setting limits for acceptable behavior. While the focus should be on reestablishing human relationships and not on retribution or punishment after the strike, inappropriate behavior from teachers or students cannot be tolerated either. Thus, firm ground rules must be laid down for appropriate staff and student behavior, with fair and consistent penalties spelled out for violations.
4. The principal must quickly, fairly, and equitably implement the terms of the new contract.
5. The principal must watch for and mediate disputes between parents and teachers and strikers and non-strikers. While in the latter case teachers can be bound by rules of post-strike conduct, parents cannot. Principals must personally step in, in such cases, and attempt to mitigate the conflict before it threatens post-strike relations with the community.
6. The principal must expect and be ready to deal with bitterness, anger, challenge of authority, complaints, etc. These are commonplace after a strike, particularly after a lengthy strike where little, if anything, was gained.

The basic principles underlying Jones's advice can be applied to situations other than teachers' strikes. Whenever bitterness or dissatisfaction lingers after a dispute has been settled, the administrator must take the time to devise a plan for treating all the affected parties in a fair and consistent manner.

Some Wise Advice

Bailey, in the final section of his excellent essay on conflict management, offers additional valuable suggestions for successfully managing conflict. First, the administrator should breed an awareness of what is "bugging" colleagues, teachers, and students. The administrator's ability "to recognize legitimate grievances and patent injustices and his willingness to respond to new hungers, new values, and new norms by reasonableness and open-mindedness are essential if conflicts are to be precluded and ultimately resolved in any basic sense."

Second, collective judgment should be substituted wherever possible for personal discretion. "The wise administrator knows how to create baffles and buffers to buy time, to absorb heat, to promote collective wisdom, to insure a maximum sense of legitimacy for final decisions."

Bailey's third piece of advice is valuable in those conflict situations that have gone beyond a state of rational negotiation. Essentially, the administrator adopts Harry Truman's five-point strategy: estimate your own resources, estimate your enemy's resources, form a judgment about what is to be done, implement your judgment with a plan, and, finally, persuade your leaders of the value of that plan and mass your forces for the attack.

Bailey's final suggestion is that the administrator should be "harshly realistic" about his or her limitations in managing conflict.

> There are times in a year, in a career, in a life when cyclonic winds and waves will roll over everything in sight and when the skill of the ablest mariner is probably less effective than his praying on his knees—if for no other reason than that he has thereby lowered the ship's center of gravity.

When all else fails, the administrator can derive some small measure of hope from knowing that time and circumstance have a way of resolving many of those petty but annoying conflicts that seem to be beyond anybody's control. Jack Greenstein, principal of an elementary school in the Chicago area, tells of his experiences with Jamie, a fifth-grade transfer student—older and bigger than his classmates—who enjoyed bullying the other children and disrupting class. Greenstein tried to win the support of Jamie's mother, but she sided with her son. Then Greenstein shifted Jamie to a different classroom, but soon Jamie's new teacher was pleading with Greenstein to get rid of the boy. Finally, Greenstein helped Jamie's mother find a spot for the boy in a parochial school, but the parochial school sent him home within a few weeks. However, at about the time Greenstein thought he would be stuck with Jamie forever (the boy gave no indication he would ever advance beyond the fifth grade), Jamie's mother moved out of the area, taking her son with her.

Need for a Variety of Approaches

One final observation about the approaches and techniques for managing conflict described in the preceding pages is that, as Edgar Kelley says, "no one method or outcome should be considered to be automatically 'best' for every situation. The resolution of conflict is always unique to the setting in which conflict occurs."

Any administrator who attempts to use the same techniques for different kinds of conflicts, says Bailey,

> is either a genius or a fool. For example, assume that a superintendent observes a raging conflict within his board of education. Quiet catalysis in the form of friendly visits to the homes of contending leaders may be the most useful approach. If the conflict is between two subordinate principals arguing about bus routes, a structured confrontation may be desirable. If the struggle is between the local

> John Birch Society and the local chapter of the American Association of University Women over sex education, public rhetoric and careful and elaborate coalition building may be the superintendent's most effective tactic. The point is that such stratagems are not usually interchangeable. Conflict-resolution styles and techniques useful in one context may be quite disastrous in another.

When a conflict occurs, state Diane Frey and Joseph Young, "most people are impulsive about their manner of resolving it. They usually choose a method learned at an early age from significant others in their environment." Administrators, Frey and Young advise, should develop an awareness of the conflict management styles they habitually use and then broaden their repertoire to include other techniques.

One factor that determines the appropriateness of a particular technique is the maturity level of followers. Marvin Fairman and Elizabeth Clark explain that beginning faculty members who are involved in a conflict will expect the administrator to weigh the evidence and then decide the matter on his or her own, whereas more experienced teachers will prefer a less active role by the administrator. Depending on the subordinates' level of experience and responsibility, the administrator may choose among several roles:

> *arbitrator*—listening to both sides and then telling one or both parties to modify their behavior
>
> *negotiator*—listening to both sides and trying to convince one or both parties to modify their behavior
>
> *facilitator*—bringing the parties together to work out a cooperative decision
>
> *mediator*—helping the parties reach a satisfactory compromise
>
> *delegator*—encouraging the parties to work through the problem on their own

Fairman and Clark warn that it is important to diagnose with care the subordinates' maturity levels: "If you are using a conflict-managing strategy that is at a lower level than the maturity level of your faculty members, it will tend to make them less mature and less responsible."

Training for Conflict Resolution

To help breed an awareness of communications and conflict management processes, numerous exercises have been designed by organizational development specialists (see Schmuck and Runkel) and others interested in the communications process. Exercises of this sort, says Bailey, "are useful in sensitizing the uninitiated to the varied worlds of conflict management."

"But alas," Bailey continues, "most are as effective as learning to swim on the sand. And many lessons learned in sociodramas are forgotten in the heat and confusion of reality."

Bailey believes that field experience is the best way to develop conflict management skills. Thus, many successful administrators of tomorrow, he states, may come from large families "where from infancy they have participated in bouncing ego brawls and have learned the hard way the value not of unanimity" but of "multianimity"—the "philosophical acceptance and delight in variety."

In preparing administrators for conflict management, Bailey adds, "it can be said that case studies, sensitivity training, and simulation are better than formal theory, that novels and plays are better than textbooks, and that apprenticeships and direct responsibility are better than anything else." In short, says Bailey, in the field of conflict management "we learn by doing."

Superintendents "with doctorates were less successful in managing conflict than those without this advanced degree," report Zeigler and his colleagues. Their explanation for this finding seems to be that colleges of education tend to view conflict as out of place in an environment—such as the school system—where expertise and logic should be the primary tools for decision-making. Consequently, it is quite possible that a prospective superintendent will come out of a college of education with little or no training in managing conflict and with an aversion to doing so. Such an individual would naturally have difficulties coping with a world in which emotion-laden issues—school busing, sex education, contract negotiations with teachers, and so forth—generate conflict.

Schools of education would be well advised to adopt a more benign view toward conflict and to devote more time to courses that discuss conflict and its management, all the while remembering Bailey's advice that actual experience is the best teacher of all.

Conclusion

Conflict is a constant companion of all human undertakings and should be considered a natural, not an anomalous, phenomenon. For most observers and participants, conflict invokes negative feelings, for it often leads to destructive ends. But conflict can also be a constructive force in organizations, leading to increased creativity and adaptability.

The art of conflict management involves maximizing constructive conflict and minimizing destructive conflict. To achieve mastery of this art, the educational administrator must understand conflict—its types, sources, and dynamics—and must be familiar with numerous techniques for managing it.

But knowledge alone is not enough; ultimately, administrators must hone their conflict management skills in the field, in their day-to-day dealings with conflict.

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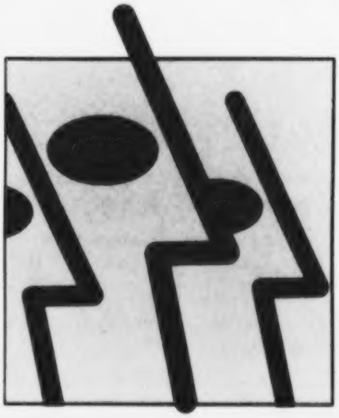

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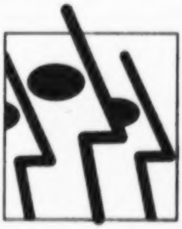

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